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The cradle of neurosis

Frank Cioffi

JEFFREY MOUSSAIEFF MASSON
The Assault on Truth: Freud's suppression of the seduction theory
308pp. Faber. £9.95.
0571 132405

There seems to have been a slight decline in the number of people willing to clap their hands and say they believe in the Oedipus complex. However that may be, Jeffrey Masson, Sanskrit scholar, psychoanalyst and ex-project director of the Freud Archives is no longer to be counted among them. Masson's book advances a discreditable explanation of Freud's abandonment of the seduction theory and its replacement by the Oedipus complex. In it he achieves the remarkable feat of concocting an account no less tendentious and unreliable than Freud's own. Masson thinks Freud accepted the seduction theory because it was forced on him by the evidence, then rejected it out of timidity. In fact Freud accepted a dubious theory because he was anxious to bring himself to the attention of the medical world and he abandoned it from belated circumspection.

It has long been apparent to a few free and discerning spirits that Freud's account of his transition from the thesis that at the root of every psychoneurosis was the patients' memory of sexual abuse in infancy to the view that it was rather to be found in their infantile incestuous fantasizing is a farago, in spite of its being re-perpetrated with minor variations in supposedly authoritative and scholarly works such as those of Ronald Clark and Frank Sulloway.

Masson's book does have the merit of addressing anew three questions which have hitherto been answered with gross inadequacy. Why did Freud embrace the seduction theory? Why did he give it up? And why did he replace it with conflicts over incestuous wishes? But the account Masson gives both of what Freud believed and as to why he stopped believing it is a distorted one.

Masson devotes an entire chapter to horrendous accounts of the torture and sexual abuse of children during the period Freud spent at Charcot's clinic: "In all likelihood Paris provided Freud with experiences and evidence on which he built his thesis. In 1896, that real sexual traumas in childhood lay at the very heart of neurotic illness." Masson goes to

pointless lengths to establish the topicality of the theme of child abuse during the period Freud spent at the Salpêtrière in order to support his claim that Freud, alerted by the experience, was all the more ready to credit his patients' a priori implausible accounts of having been sexually abused in early childhood. Pointless because the phenomenon Masson so assiduously documents is not that to which Freud's seduction theory assigns pathogenic potency. The pathogenic agent in Freud's seduction theory is not pain, terror or physical injury but precocious sexual arousal. Children may be starved, beaten or tortured but providing they have not been simultaneously sexually stimulated the experience can have no neurotic aftermath.

Masson is also mistaken in holding that Freud based his conviction of the reality of the seductions on stories recalled and recounted by his patients in the course of analysis, though here he is the victim of Freud's retrospective confabulatory or mendacious accounts rather than his own tendentiousness. Even Freud's contemporaneous accounts are incoherent. Although when he wishes to strengthen his case for the reality of the seductions Freud suggests that the patients themselves recalled and recounted them, when he is concerned that he might appear naively oblivious of the possibility that they were hysterical fabrications we get this: "Whilst calling these infantile experiences into consciousness they still try . . . to withhold belief by emphasising that they have no feeling of recollecting these scenes . . . patients assure me . . . emphatically of their unbelief . . ." (incidentally, would an honourable man have represented this state of affairs by speaking of "statements made by patients in which they ascribed their symptoms to passive sexual experiences in early childhood" as Freud did in 1914?)

Freud's reconstructions were not based on confessions but on his own theoretical requirements and/or intuitions. He believed in the genuineness of the seductions not because his patients remembered and related them but because, in his view, they were re-enacting them. Another consideration which reinforced his belief in their reality was the discovery of his own paedophilic impulses. In a letter to Fliess he reports a dream of sex-play with his nine-year-old daughter (not his niece, as Jones states in the Life).

Masson insists that Freud gave up the seduction theory "not for theoretical or clinical reasons but because of a personal failure of

moral courage." But Freud's dereliction in moral courage showed itself not in what he abandoned but in what he insisted on retaining: the boast that he could reconstruct by psychoanalytic method, dream interpretation in particular, the lost years of childhood. Masson's repeated assertions that Freud dismissed his patients' seduction stories as lies make one wonder as to his grasp of Freud's argument. Freud did not accuse his patients of lying, and it was more than charity that stopped him, for had he done so he would simultaneously have undermined the claim that in "remembering" infantile seductions his patients were repro-



ducing in distorted form their infantile experience of incestuous fantasizing. The Oedipus complex both explains the adult seduction memories and is rendered plausible by them. For Freud to have cast doubt on the sincerity of his patients' conviction that they had been seduced would have been as fatal to the Oedipus complex as to the seduction theory.

Why then did Freud decide that most of the eighteen seductions he had originally reported had not taken place? Although he said that it was "through contradiction under definitely ascertainable circumstances" it is difficult to construct a plausible scenario along these lines.

"Your daughter, Sir, has alluded to some striking peculiarities in your sexual character. I wonder whether, in the interests of science, you would care to authenticate and perhaps enlarge on them." It can't often have happened this way. And, in any case, what would a denial prove? You might as a result of inquiries be able to absolve a particular seducer because the seduction story involved inconsistency or anachronism, but how would it enable you to decide that there had been no seduction at all? Freud was perfectly familiar with the fact that an apparent memory may contain both veridical and non-veridical elements. I suspect that his "contradiction in definitely ascertainable circumstances" belongs with Cyril Burt's series of identical twins.

Freud gave up the seduction theory because he realized that the theme of seduction had been introduced into the material of the analytic sessions by his own preconceptions. His problem was how to disengage from the theory without at the same time conceding the unreliability of psychoanalytic method. He had to find an account of his error from which it followed that "not the analysis but the patient must in some way bear the responsibility", as he was to put it twenty years later in the *Introductory Lectures*. There may also be something to the view that Freud discovered the Oedipus complex in the course of his own self-analysis and then superimposed it on his clinical data. This would explain how it came about that a clinical practice the staple of which was women suffering the aftermath of infantile involvement with their fathers should suggest to Freud a Greek myth about a man who married his mother. (Poor women. Not even their troubles are allowed to have their own names.) The way in which Freud gets from his male patients' "memories" of false seductions to their true incestuous fantasies is not much less gratuitous. He reported not a single "memory" of maternal seduction, yet we are asked to believe that infantile incestuous desire for their mothers lay at the root of his male patients' adult seduction memories.

Masson's chapter on the Emma Eckstein episode is interesting but irrelevant. In it we learn that Freud misdiagnosed a patient's post-operative nasal haemorrhaging as hysterical in character when it was due to some gauze having been left in the wound. The connection is supposed to be that rather than admit that Emma was suffering the aftermath of infantile seduction Freud assigned her bleeding to a hysterical mechanism. "If Emma Eckstein's

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Among multitudinous voices

R. K. Narayan

VED MEHTA
The Ledge Between the Streams
525pp. Harvill. £12.50.
0002721538

Daddyji Mamaji
346pp. Picador. Paperback £3.50.
0330232328

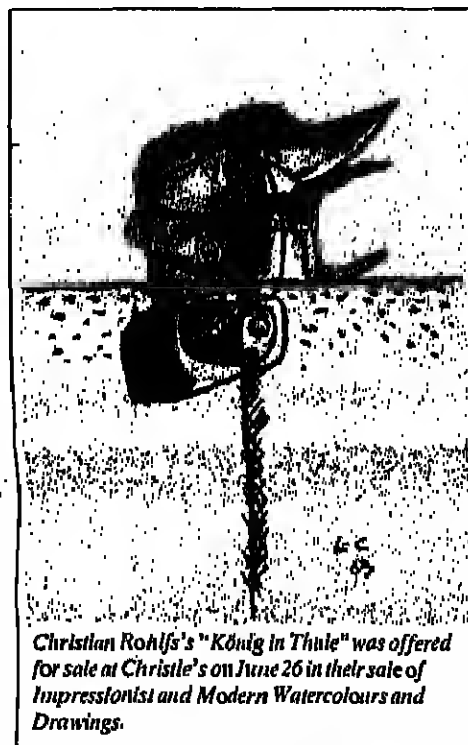
Some years ago Ved Mehta and I were almost neighbours in New York. I was staying in an apartment on East 57th Street, and he in the Picasso Apartments (if I remember right) on 58th or 59th. What brought us together was an assignment he had to write about me for the *New Yorker*. We met often, either at my apartment or in his. He gathered material for his piece unobtrusively. Never was it at any time an interview for a journalistic feature, the sort of thing that plagues me all the time. He would telephone me or drop in for a chat or we would walk down the 2nd or 3rd Avenue, talking, commenting or joking. Sometimes he would pause and ask, "What are you chewing?" "Betel-nut." "Is that a habit? How do you carry it around—my I see it?" I'd hand over to him the little tin tube containing the betel-nut pieces. He would turn it round between his fingers, anquire about its colour—and later describe it accurately and relevantly in his writing. Sometimes he would call me from his desk at the *New Yorker* office to get clarification of some point. He would ask, "Is your brother's name spelled with one 'T' or two?" or a similar question; ultimately he produced a 10,000 word composition in galley for my scrutiny. When I returned the proofs with corrections, he'd telephone from time to time to check the spelling of a name or a date or point out some inconsistency or self-contradiction in a statement or description.

It was impossible to think that you were in the company of one who was sightless. He did not like anyone to mention it. He never carried a white stick. He did not like to be helped or guided. He crossed the New York streets effortlessly; waited on the pavement and sensed perfectly the "Don't walk" sign changing to "Walk". He could reach his floor correctly, whether it was the 18th or the 11th, in an elevator, without anyone's assistance. When I visited his room he would offer me perfectly browned toast and coffee on a tray, leaving me in the study with a caution not to follow him into the kitchen. His hands knew where every switch, handle and gadget was—every article was perfectly positioned and his hands could pick up anything he required without fumbling. His life was perfectly organized—he got through the morning papers, read books and reviewed them, performed editorial work at the *New Yorker* desk, sat through films, or plays in a theatre, and enjoyed the shows; one felt impelled to ask questions, explanations, but I realized that he'd prefer not to be questioned, and I respected his reserve, and accepted him as he was.

The *Ledge Between the Streams*, however, provides all the answers one might have sought. Spanning a period of nine years, 1940-49, up to his fiftieth year, this is a family saga—filled with multitudinous voices and footfalls for Ved. Ved lost his vision before he was five after an attack of meningitis. Four sisters and two brothers at home with Daddyji and Mamaji, and numerous cousins and relations coming and going, his hours were filled with interesting talks, plays and activities. When Ved describes his domestic existence, every one of his sisters and brothers and cousins emerges in clear-cut outlines, and we never miss or mix up the identity of anyone. You cannot mistake Um for Usho or Nimmi for Poni, or miss the barb in someone else's characteristic observations. In addition to the immediate members of the family, cousins, nephews, uncles, aunts, grandparents, and grand uncles and aunts galore, walk in and out of the pages, and Ved enjoys this profusion of kinsmen, and lives intensely in a wealth of human association. I have used the word "saga" deliberately, as this book reminds one of *The Forsyte Saga* with its jostling family members. If Ved had decided to use this material for a novel, he'd have produced a novel of grand stature. His style possesses the convincing, beguiling charm of a

good novel. I am stressing this point for the reason that reading the book has brought home to me my earlier mistake in thinking that Ved Mehta was a good writer in many aspects but perhaps lacked imaginative or creative quality. Now I want to proclaim this autobiography as nothing less than a literary masterpiece.

Ved Mehta's early life in Lahore is the part of the book that I found most enjoyable. Their home in Mehta Gulli, a cul-de-sac in Lahore where an earlier generation of Mehtas had joined to build their houses with contiguous walls and terraces so that the entire clan could live closely-knit. Bhabiji, Ved's paternal grandmother, marched every morning and evening with all the children, sometimes twelve of them, up to the statue of Queen Victoria at the end of the road. She termed Queen Victoria "Top Queen", and admired her: "The reign of the Top Queen was the best of all reigns". Bhabiji used to say to us, "In her reign, people could walk the streets wearing a lot of gold and no one would bother them. Such was the presence of authority of Queen Victoria." She spent some time talking to the sentry guarding the statue; who would, as Ved Mehta remembers, question "Are all these your children?" and she would reply deliberately vaguely, "These are God's bounty", in order to avert the Evil Eye which might be cast



Christian Rohlf's "König in Thule" was offered for sale at Christie's on June 26 in their sale of Impressionist and Modern Watercolours and Drawings.

on the children if the man should exclaim, "What a lot of grandchildren!" We have enchanting glimpses of the grandmother in the midst of a vast number of sons and daughters-in-law. She was the one who induced and helped her sons to build their homes in Mehta Gulli, stipulating that they build a small room for her since she wanted to be independent, leaving her sons to live their own lives. Once when asked why she preferred children's company, Ved remembers her explaining, "My sons now belong to their wives. Mothers-in-law should be seen not heard..."

Mehta Gulli swarmed with playmates, mostly cousins, and Ved Mehta was lost in their company, playing, flying kites (or rather assisting his cousins to fly theirs as they blantly remarked at times: "You can't see, how can you fly a kite? You may hold the string and roll the loose thread into a ball"). This phase of charmed life ended when his father came in one day and announced that he was transferred to Rawalpindi. At Rawalpindi they lived in a bungalow with a compound and servant's quarters, where Ved spent much of his time in the company of servants, listening to their innocent philosophies and problems and stories, while his sisters were away at school. When he moved around inside the house, he stumbled, bumped into things and knocked down furniture, which often annoyed his mother, who would ask him to stay put and not disarrange things and get in everybody's way. But Ved was active and moved about as he pleased—cultivating, developing what he terms "Facial Vision"—

an ability that the blind develop to sense objects and terrain by the feel of the air and by differences in sound. The air at the edge of a roof feels lighter than the air near a table, and sounds echo differently in different rooms, depending on the size of the room,

the number of its open and shut windows, and so on. Those who lose their sight in childhood develop this ability naturally and fearlessly, and therefore to a higher degree than those who lose their sight in later life. So, without knowing it, during the kite chases I was learning how to get around—by sensing the currents of air and by listening to the patter of feet on a roof, to the scrapes of shoes along a wall, to the rattle of a drainpipe as boys clambered down it.

He learnt music, and bicycle riding, and lived in a world of his own. His father was a busy doctor in the Public Health Service, often away on official tours; or when in town, busy at his desk clearing files, or relaxing in his club. When he came home he spent his time with his children, especially with Ved, whom he wanted to live normally without a feeling of missing anything in life. I'd call him (Daddyji) a heroic man, who was unsentimental and practical, and provided every opportunity for Ved to develop as a normal individual without being weighed down by despair or self-pity. In a letter to the Director of the Arkansas School for the Blind, Dr Mehta explains:

Since his blindness over eleven years ago, I have left no stone unturned to give him as best an education as possible in India but as you know the facilities in my country are very limited indeed. . . . Both my son and I are grateful to you for the hopes given therein to admit him into your institute. . . . Ved regularly received *Reader's Digest* every month and reads the same and he can read, understand and talk in the English language fairly fluently. He was presented with a small radio set a few years ago which has helped him a great deal to increase his knowledge of English as well as of the world. He has also a very good ear for music and if given proper facilities to

Desert service

Darrell Bates

GAWAIN BELL
Shadows on the Sand: The Memoirs of Sir
Gawain Bell
258pp. C. Hurst. £13.50.
0905838920

For twenty-six years, from 1931 to 1957, Gawain Bell served in the Sudan and the Middle East, and these are his memoirs for this period. The writing of memoirs by those who have lived in distant places is a task, or an indulgence, which many attempt and few achieve with satisfaction or success. It is beset with pitfalls and problems, not least of which is whether to write for those who have shared the same sort of life or for a much wider public which lives and thinks domestically in the present. Sir Gawain, who was a good horseman and an excellent shot, manages to shoot and ride himself out of these difficulties with the same seemingly effortless ease with which he surmounted the ups and downs of his career. One says "seemingly" because it is clear that, in spite of his Dragon School, Wykehamist and Oxford training in calculated understatement, he worked extremely hard at learning, improving and exercising the Arabic which was perhaps the linchpin both of his advancement and his own content.

Another reason why this is such a readable book is that it is based less on memories, filtered and cleansed by hindsight and time, than on the many hundreds of letters which the author wrote to his parents and on the diaries which he kept after the Second World War. He also has a clear and unfussy style of prose, and the ability, rare in those inclined to reminisce, to pick out from his variegated experience the kind of incidents and occasions which will interest or entertain or move the general reader. His account of how, when he finally arrived at his first destination in the middle of nowhere in the Sudan, he was carried to the dark across a raging torrent on a bedstead, is splendidly evocative. Appealing too are his stories of his African grey parrot who often came to the rescue, when people or events became awkward, with well-judged expletives in Arabic or on one notable occasion with "Bugger off" in English. He also has a good anecdote about the sensitive camel-men who collected the sanitary buckets in pre-war Khartoum and left sprigs of bougainvillea in the buckets to sweeten the operation after Bell first brought his English bride to the Sudan.

develop the same he should do extremely well to

line. He is a fairly tall boy for his age being 5' and 5 1/2" height with straight nose, straight hair, and a complexion like that of an Italian or a Spanish-Aryan type as we all are from the north of the country.

The post-war developments in India and the struggle for Independence caused upheavals all round; the creation of Pakistan uprooted the Mehta family from their house in Lahore (where Dr Mehta had been posted again to Rawalpindi); they had to abandon their home, and escaped at the last minute, to Lahore where he was being torn by communal hatred. Ultimately the Mehta family were resettled in Delhi. Dr Mehta being promoted Deputy Director General of Public Health, Ved Mehta after a lot of trial and various institutions was convinced that he should go to America for fulfilment of his scholarly aspirations. His self typed out applications to every conceivable institution. (By now he had learnt and practised touch typing and had become quite adept.) Finally Dr Wooley, Director of the Arkansas School for the Blind, responded sympathetically, and Ved's career took its turn.

At first sight I rather quailed at the appearance of this volume, but once I was on it I forgot its bulk. I may say I have perused any other 500-odd pages with pleasure. *Daddyji Mamaji* in Picador paperback is a valuable introduction to the *Ledge Between the Streams*, providing a fascinating account of Ved's earlier life.

In addition to his ability to pick out and relate such delicacies or indelicacies Bell is an excellent story-teller. His range of military employments in the Sudan and the Middle East provided him with rich material and the three pages devoted to what is known as the melon-seed murder in the Kordofan, for example, are not a whit long. Equally good are his pen-portraits of those whom he met and worked with. Some of the most colourful characters, like the Bonstead, Robin Bailey (who instructed him in a recent arrival to learn some stories from *The Thousand and One Nights* in the night and often highly indecent Arabic for profit on his rounds) and E. G. Evans, "the plucky major" or in the vernacular "Abu al-Hajj", "the large, fast-moving spider", are mentioned only remembered by a small, dimly remembered, but others, like Glubb and Thesiger, are better known. Many of the most sympathetic portraits are of Sudanese and Middle East Arabs. And if some of the feelings that, like the rest of us, he is occasionally blinkered in his judgments by loyalty and friendship, there is reassurance in his unenthusiastic opinions of General Sir Evelyn of Orde Wingate, whose "credit was not endorsed by those who saw him at first hand."

But there is more to these admirable memoirs than pen-portraits, anecdotes and vivid descriptions of the desert. *Shadows on the Sand* is essentially a serious, sympathetic but not uncritical account of the transition of the Sudan from absolute paternalism to absolute Independence. When the author arrived in 1931, the Sudan, the ninth largest country in the world, was administered by an official of less than 150 British officers. When he left in 1954, it was on the verge of becoming a republic. During the war years he was in the line, Syria and Trans-Jordan, and was certainly finding less pacific employment. As a political officer, then as a soldier in a unit of bizarre units like the Druse Cavalry and the Levant Fisheries Patrol, before ending up in Glubb's Arab Legion. Here he observed the sad, bitter conflict between the Arab and Palestinian Arabs and the infighting of the British and French and what he called "the traditional Druse practice of keeping a foot on the neck of every man."

These memoirs, with their wide range of incidents and old-fashioned charm, will be nostalgic for the past, with appeal to a wide audience, as well as to those who have loved Sudan and the Sudanese.

Class of '84

Mary R. Lefkowitz

PAUL FUSSELL
Caste Marks: Style and status in the USA
203pp. Heinemann. £8.95.
043427500X

The Classics department at Wellesley still possesses a contraption called a stereopticon that enables one to view through binocular lenses double-imaged sepia postcards of classical sites as they appeared one hundred years ago. Through this device young women, confined by geography and financial restraints to the second-state Piranesi in their classroom, saw all they would ever see of ancient Europe. But now that going abroad is easier (and cheaper) than going to California, armchair travel has been replaced by armchair sociology; instead of gazing at illustrations of monuments, we peep through metaphorical keyholes into the houses and lives of our fellow Americans.

Today's stereopticon is the catalog(ue). Anyone who has a steady job has a credit card; the card-owner's name is made known to scores of advertisers-by-mail; magazines and pamphlets arrive daily, filled with tempting coloured illustrations of clothes, furniture, appliances, "collectibles", for work, play, home, garden and perhaps most sacred of all, cars. Sitting in one's living-(ie, drawing-) room or possibly even on the lavatory, one can leaf through thousand of "offerings" from companies all over the country, each promising personalized care from their smiling employees. But since the purveyors of the mailing lists have only a general notion of their customer's disposable incomes, inevitably one receives stacks of information about what one could not conceivably want to buy: Frugal Frannie's Fashion Sweaters (ie, jerseys) in

pink polyester with simulated pearl collars; electronic door-chimes that can be set to play different tunes; seven-piece sets of silver-with-magenta-trim nylon luggage that might impress the skycap (ie, porter) at the airport, if you can find one.

Since the catalogues keep pouring in, many people must actually buy these things. But now, thanks to Paul Fussell, I have some notion why. Taste, according to Fussell, is a function of class. In order to move up or down a notch one needs to change not how much one spends but rather the catalogues one buys from. The wearers of pink polyester sweaters with pearl collars are high proles who want to show directly how they spend their money. Their lower-middle neighbours might have tuncful doorbells or "collect" commemorative china thimbles. Upcoming middle-class executives would sport the matching luggage. It is the upper-middle and lower-upper (since real uppers, Fussell believes, don't do much of anything but inherit) who restore old houses, wear clothes made of natural fibres, and conceal the extent of their property behind high fences, long driveways, and the intricate layers of clothing described in *The Preppy Handbook*.

In England, at least once upon a time, one could tell what class a person was by how he spoke and where he was educated. In America you can learn more from his possessions and his environment. Class, Fussell insists, despite all efforts, can never be concealed completely. Successful executives betray their middle-class origins by stating that they "live" by the advertisements in the *New Yorker*; lower-uppers display an indifference to the appearance of their cars that the acutely self-conscious middles could not tolerate and the ostentatious proles could not comprehend. One could tell that President Kennedy was not upper-class (for all

his family's wealth) because he wore two-button suits. But since he went to Harvard he inevitably had more "class" than Presidents Nixon or Reagan who, whatever they wear, still went to un-name schools.

If all else fails, Fussell offers keys to language and pronunciation. These should be of particular use to the foreigner, since regional variations are not reliable indicators of class; more can be determined from tendencies toward euphemism (*home* instead of *house*, *passed away* instead of *died*), multiplication of syllables (*obligate* instead of *oblige*, *processes* to rhyme with *indices*), accentuation of foreign words, especially placing the stress on the final syllable of any French word—all characteristics of the middle class.

Only the people who strive to avoid the classifications inherent in every aspect of American life can escape detection. These rare persons, designated as "X's", are usually the satirists and critics who live outside of or off society, the artists, poets, actors and academics. Fussell claims that "it's only as an X, detached from the constraints and anxieties of the whole class racket, that an American can enjoy something like the Liberty promised on the coinage". But I wonder if these revolutionaries, so long as they feel constrained to comment on the rest of us by their eccentric behaviour, can ever truly manage to be free. In their struggle to be different they too achieve a uniformity, with their pseudo-prole jug wines, Vietnamese food, kitschy furniture, patched (but clean) jeans, straight talk spiced with foreign words (correctly pronounced) and learned obscenity and vulgarity. Presumably, if the X doesn't contrive constantly to be listening to the proles and middles and analysing conformist social mores, he might end up by forgetting to wear his cowboy hat to a mid-town

Manhattan dinner-party and slipping inconspicuously back into his parents' social class.

In case you don't know what class you or your friends belong in, Fussell provides exercises at the back of the book to test your sensitivity to class inferences, and fake Ann Landers letters with pungent answers to plaintive questions (the response to "Have a Good Day" is "Thank you, but I have other plans"). There is also a scale to evaluate class by taking an inventory of the contents of living-rooms. The score can be improved by owning or displaying foreign-language books, the *7LS* (because it is both intellectual and English), original works of art by "recognized practitioners" (except Picasso), antiques and frayed oriental rugs. But points can be taken away if you can see a bowling ball with its cover, oil-painted photographs of the owner's children (or paintings by them), framed high-school diplomas, or cases with collections of commemorative objects, such as bronze statues of straining athletes (special edition cast in honour of the Los Angeles Olympics). The living-room test seems pretty accurate, though an upper limit should have been set on desirable items like original paintings, to restrain *nouveau riche* overkill. Sometimes, too, Fussell seems to insert some of his own personal prejudices, as when he insists that polyester is middle-class rather than simply convenient, or that purple, now chic, once roynl, is a distinctly prml colour. Also the test reveals that he expects his book to be enjoyed not just by the elite Xs but by normal upper-middles. But then they are the only other Americans who actually read anything other than newspapers, best-selling novels, and, of course, catalogues, and who believe that they can find some significance in familiar surroundings and the conventions of ordinary life.

rights and, on the other hand, the search for excellence and ways of holding teachers accountable have kept the great educational debate alive in America. Diane Ravitch summarizes it admirably. Readers will learn a good deal about the politics of attempts to blame American schools for social and political problems or to see them as offering solutions.

The other two books here are case-studies of less general interest. David Rogers and Norman H. Chung, on the basis of depth interviews with educationalists and civic leaders, set out to demonstrate that the devolution of educational control in New York City has raised standards and equalized provision. The approach is typical and the conclusion predictable. Management styles in each of eight districts are described and compared. Differences of provision, it is concluded, are a function of the personality of the chief education officer and the situation itself. The education of blacks in a ghetto is different, but neither better nor worse than that received by middle-class whites in a middle-class suburb. The research is designed to strengthen traditional American belief in the efficacy of decentralization.

Robert B. Everhart's *Reading, Writing and Resistance* represents a recent vogue in research in the US (and elsewhere) based on the insights of Jürgen Habermas and the theories of Marx. In this case participation research sets out to learn how young adolescents in an American junior high school negotiate reality. Snatches of conversation between individuals, in identified groups of youngsters, are recorded to discover how they react to the time they spend in school. They do not seem to add much to our understanding of what goes on in school. The conclusion that "As participants, or creators of these cultural forms [reproduced knowledge], students are reproducing forms that will doom them to expressions of reaction but will not foster critical opposition" could as well be inferred from the ideology of the author as from the data he records.

Together, these three books illustrate how the politics of education have influenced the response of American educators to problems created since 1945 by social, political and economic change. They also illustrate a desire on the part of researchers to question traditional research even though at the same time their own research supports traditional remedies.

Forgetting

The glasses left at last night's restaurant.
The raincoat in the alcove where you hung it.
The bag you knew you had when you reached London.
The muddle about the name of the booked garage.
The confusion over a number, an address.

What you perhaps said, or might have said.
What comes back later, laughed at by a friend.
What's scribbled in the last page of your diary.
What surfaces next day at 5.0 p.m.
What wakes you from a dream, and is still bad.

Missing, as the ratchet slips on the motor-mower.
Missing, like a tooth the tongue can't leave alone.
Missing, a gap between familiar houses.
Missing, a beat of the heart in fear or exhaustion.
Missing, as in a battle, but not presumed dead.

ANTHONY THWAITE

Classroom politics

Brian Holmes

DIANE RAVITCH
The Troubled Crusade: American education, 1945-1980
384pp. New York: Basic Books. £16.95.
0465087566
DAVID ROGERS and NORMAN H. CHUNG
110 Livingston Street Revisited: Decentralization in action
241pp. New York University Press. \$26.
0814773877
ROBERT B. EVERHART
Reading, Writing and Resistance: Adolescence and labor in a junior high school
302pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £15.95.
070094507

Such is the faith of Americans in education that when things are going wrong they tend to blame the schools. Since 1945 the country has faced a number of international crises—the Cold War, Vietnam and the Middle East. During this period old domestic political conflicts have influenced the outcome of debates in which education has been seen as the cause of a crisis or as a panacea to cure the ills of the nation.

Of the three books reviewed here Diane Ravitch's *The Troubled Crusade: American education, 1945-1980* is the one from which non-American readers can learn most. She selects major issues of policy and uses history pragmatically to show how the politics of education in the US influenced attempts to achieve equal opportunity at every level of formal education, from nursery school to graduate school, which "became the overriding goal of postwar educational reformers". It is an aspiration which has informed education throughout the world.

An early post-war move to improve equality, supported by the National Education Association, was to seek Federal financial aid. Southern politicians objected to it in the belief that the blacks might benefit. Liberal Protestants, exemplified by the matriarchal figure of Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt, protested because it might help the Roman Catholic Church. President Truman's proposals on civil rights ran into similar trouble from segregationists. In the event, segregated schools were ruled un-

constitutional by the Supreme Court in 1954 but the courts have consistently ruled against public finance for Catholic schools. These traditional issues, and the politics of bilingual education, are analysed by Ravitch in a way which illuminates debates in other countries, where problems of equalizing educational provision under conditions of cultural diversity have arisen.

To fact Federal aid to returning GIs initiated a massive expansion of higher education; an expansion which was not universally accepted. University academics like Robert M. Hutchins, W. C. Bagley, I. L. Kandel and J. B. Conant feared that it would lower standards and distort desirable and traditional university courses. Progressive educationists, on the other hand, wanted to create a system of education to meet the needs of all, rather than a few, young Americans.

The attack of the traditionalists against progressive educationists was broadened by Senator Joseph McCarthy to categorize teachers as Communists. Teachers were discredited politically and the Progressive Education Associa-

tion was closed down in 1955 at Urbana Cham-

paign, Illinois, in the presence of not more than

five members. Congressional opinion against

child adjustment programmes was mobilized

after Sputnik, which provoked some research

workers to demonstrate that the US education

system was vastly inferior to that of the USSR.

One outcome, the National Defense and

Education Act of 1958, was that vast sums of

Federal money were made available to pro-

mote rigorous courses in mathematics, physics,

chemistry, biology, modern languages and the

"gifted child" movement.

In the 1960s trouble-spots in American

education were plain to see. Academic free-

dom again came under attack. In its defence

Berkeley students protested raucously against

the Committee on un-American Activities.

International events, particularly the war in

Vietnam, gave impetus to a student movement

which culminated, tragically, in the shooting of

students at Kent State University.

Domestic problems associated with providing

equality of opportunity for members of minority

groups and those living in inner cities, civil

Just in time

Brief authority

Archie Brown

MARTIN EBON
The Andropov File: The life and ideas of Yuri V. Andropov, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
288pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £9.95.
0283 990260
VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV and ELENA KLEPIKOVA
Yuri Andropov: A secret passage into the Kremlin
Translated by Guy Dmielek
302pp. Hare. £11.50.
07090 16301

It is too early to tell whether the fifteen months during which Yuri Andropov, beset by failing health, headed the Soviet Communist Party will have much lasting impact on the system. Neither of the books noticed here is particularly helpful in contributing to an interim verdict. That is only partly because they were completed while Andropov was still alive and have more to say about his previous career than about his General Secretaryship. It is also because they have little fresh or reliable insight to offer on any stage of Andropov's route to the top.

Martin Ebon's biography of Andropov is a very thin one, eked out by accounts of previous heads of the Soviet security organs, such as Yezhov and Beria, and by lengthy selections from Andropov's speeches (though the latter have at least the merit of being the versions published at the time rather than the bowdlerized ones which appeared later). Vladimir Solovoy and Elena Klepikova, former Soviet journalists who emigrated to the United States in 1977, have produced a work in which fact and fiction, rumour and speculation, are so intermingled that the effort to disentangle them would take more time and space than it is worth. (It will be some years before we can expect a truly scholarly account of Andropov's political career – and even then it will of necessity be less complete than a corresponding biography of a Western leader – but the most balanced and best-documented book to appear thus far remains that by Jonathan Steele and Eric Abraham, *Andropov in Power*.)

Given that (as Soviet officialdom acknowledged only after his death) Andropov was receiving treatment on a dialysis machine from as early as February 1983 and was fighting a losing battle against deteriorating health for the greater part of his brief General Secretaryship, it is remarkable how much in fact he did in that time. Quite deliberately, he set about rejuvenating the party and state apparatus and, as compared with his predecessor, placed rather greater emphasis on professional competence and less on long-standing acquaintance.

The extent of the personnel change was no doubt less than Andropov would have achieved had he been fully fit or had his brief tenure of office included a Party Congress. It is only at these five-yearly Congresses that new blood can be brought into the Central Committee, and the next Congress is not due until 1986. Yet the turnover in office-holders was unusually high for any Soviet leader's first fifteen months. At the time of Andropov's death one quarter of the voting members of the Politburo, over a sixth of the top leadership team (by which I mean full and candidate members of the Politburo plus Secretaries of the Central Committee), over a third of the heads of departments of the Central Committee, more than a fifth of the Moscow-based members of the USSR Council of Ministers and over a fifth of the regional party secretaries were people who had not been in those posts at the time of Brezhnev's death. This was quite a brisk start, and it is noteworthy that the great majority of the new appointees were significantly younger than the men they replaced. Should it be thought that the use of "men" here means that a male chauvinist slip is showing, it is not so. To find women in high places in Soviet politics, one has to turn to the "dignified" rather than the "efficient" parts (in Bagelof's terms) of the Soviet system – to the more ceremonial Supreme Soviet, rather than to the posts of highest executive power. Those who took the place of the party officials and ministers who were pensioned off were also men; that was something

which did not change under Andropov.

There were, however, other changes. Some were ideological, such as Andropov's insistence that the Soviet Union was only "at the beginning" of the stage of "developed socialism" which would be a historically long one – a much less complacent view of "developed socialism" than that offered by Brezhnev and one which came closer to acknowledging the extent of existing deficiencies. More important, Andropov permitted Mikhail Gorbachev to introduce a significant agricultural reform (giving greater autonomy to groups of farmers) which he had not been able to push through under Brezhnev, and advocates of more far-reaching economic reform were given some encouragement. Soviet journals began to publish an increasing number of articles calling for significant change in the economic mechanism (including some which went so far as to suggest that most or all of the industrial ministries be abolished). Though such proposed change in economic (and, therefore, in the Soviet context, political) structures threatened vested interests and provoked opposition, the question of economic reform was at least brought back on to the political agenda in a way in which it had not been since the mid-1960s.

Both *The Andropov File* and *Yuri Andropov* are concerned with their subject's career before he reached the top job in the Kremlin. Ebon gets fewer things wrong, but he tells us little that is new. Solovoy and Klepikova's account is not short of novelty, but it is a novelty we could do without. Andropov is accorded powers as chairman of the KGB which he did not possess by virtue of that office. It is absurd to suggest that he could single-handedly decide in 1978 that the article in the Georgian Constitution which had hitherto accorded the Georgian language the status of official language of Georgia should be deleted. It is true that it was deleted in the draft of the new Georgian Constitution and restored only following a demonstration in Tbilisi, but there is no reason to suppose that it is the KGB who have a decisive influence on the content of the draft constitutions of the Soviet union republics any more than on the Constitution of the USSR itself.

There is much else in this book which does not hold water. No serious evidence, for example, is produced to support the most unlikely suggestion that Andropov actually became chairman of the KGB a whole year or more earlier than the date of May 18, 1967, when, according to official Soviet sources, he succeeded Semichastny in that post. The Solovoy-Klepikova account of "a close, secret and fruitful collaboration" between Andropov and the Georgian First Secretary, Shevardnadze, flies in the face of much evidence that Shevardnadze was backing Chernenko for the succession to Brezhnev, notwithstanding the fact that Shevardnadze's anti-corruption campaign and vigorous leadership style might indeed have been expected to appeal to Andropov. Similarly, though Andropov clearly took a highly positive view of the abilities of Gorbachev and while the latter was given enhanced responsibilities during Andropov's General Secretaryship, it is ludicrous to see Andropov as Gorbachev's sole patron within the Politburo at the time when Gorbachev began his rapid political rise during Brezhnev's last years. It was precisely because he had support in a number of quarters that he was able to make such fast progress. Gorbachev's primary patron had been Pyodur Kulakov whom he replaced as Secretary of the Central Committee responsible for agriculture on the latter's death, and Kulakov's links with Chernenko dated back to the 1940s – as is clear from the public record, and not merely from hearsay. No doubt some of the more politically paranoid among the American readers of this book will believe the authors when they tell us that the seizing and holding prisoner of the American hostages in the US Embassy in Tehran was "carried out under the direction of the KGB", but others will take a lot of convincing. The same applies, *a fortiori*, to the story that in September 1982, Fedorchuk (at that time chairman of the KGB) put Brezhnev under house arrest.

Solovoy and Klepikova belong to the school of writers on Soviet politics who, once they have debunked the image of Andropov as the jazz-loving, English-speaking liberal which some Western journalists were glibly enough to believe, seem to think that they have dis-

posed of the more serious analyses which saw him as one of the more open-minded Soviet leaders (particularly an economic reformer) within the spectrum of opinion which is compatible with membership of the Politburo. That range of view and of disposition is obviously not as broad as to include "liberals" in any recognizably Western sense of that term, but the leadership is not as "unpolitically united" as either Soviet propaganda or anti-Soviet propaganda make out, and personal differences have often (though not always) been linked with differing policy orientations.

The lack of nuance in Solovoy and Klepikova's discussion of the Soviet leadership is evident, too, when they talk of the possibility of Andropov trying to restore "order" in Eastern Europe. All Soviet leaders are in favour of "order" in Eastern Europe. What distinguishes one from another is their judgment of what the limits are within which it is acceptable for East European régimes to establish for themselves economic and political conditions most conducive to "order" as they perceive it. Andropov's approach as head of the Socialist Countries department of the Central Committee, his close personal relations with Janos Kadar over more than a quarter of a century, and his backing for Hungarian economic experimentation and the *modus vivendi* between the party and people achieved in Hungary over the past two decades all suggest that he was to be numbered amongst the most flexible and least dogmatic of Soviet leaders in this important area. Thinly veiled criticism of recent Hungarian policy which has been published in the Soviet Union since Andropov's death is clear enough evidence that at least two different views of developments in Hungary are held within the higher echelons of the Soviet Communist Party. It is understandable that, notwithstanding the role played by Andropov in 1956, his death was regretted by reform-minded Hungarian party intellectuals and gave rise to some apprehension in Budapest.

More fundamentally, Solovoy and Klepikova are wrong in regarding the KGB as hav-

ing a superior authority to the party in the contemporary Soviet Union. In their extensive terms, "Andropov's coup d'état laid bare police foundations of the Soviet state, when the Party itself became merely an appendage to it." In fact, it is quite clear that Suslov's death in January 1982, which opened the way for Andropov to move from the KGB chairmanship to a Secretaryship of the Central Committee (while retaining his full membership of the Politburo), enhanced, rather than diminished, his powers. On the Solovoy-Klepikova account, Andropov's move from Dzerzhinsky Square to the Central Committee building should logically have been regarded as a demotion. Yet neither Andropov nor well-informed observers regarded it as such. The ultimate control of the top party leadership over the security organs and the military, important institutional interests though both of the latter are, remains an important last of Soviet political life.

The choice of Andropov's successor underlined this. Whatever else may be said about the selection of Konstantin Chernenko (who has spent a much larger proportion of his career than did Andropov in the party apparatus) as General Secretary of the party and a Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet is fully in keeping with the official description of the Communist Party as "the leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system".

The most recent issue of *Survey*, a journal of East & West studies (Vol 28 no 1, 212pp. Macmillan, 133 Oxford Street, London W1), is largely devoted to an examination of Andropov's period in office and an evaluation of the future under Chernenko. Contributors include Michel Heller ("Andropov: A Retrospective View"), Dora Sturman ("Chernenko as Andropov: Ideological Perspectives"), and W. Knight and Joan Elliot. This issue also contains articles on "The Manchester Guardian and the Soviet purges 1936-38" by Peter Odell, on George Orwell by Alain Besançon and "The Problem of Totalitarianism" by G. Gershman.

The burdens of equality

Lesley Chamberlain

CAROLA HANSSON and KAREN LIDEN
Moscow Women: Thirteen Interviews
Translated by Gerry Bothmer, George Blecher, and Lone Blecher
192pp. Allison and Busby. Paperback £3.95.
085031 5654

There is no equivalent of the Women's Movement in the Soviet Union and officially no need for it, since men and women are equal. Putting this claim to the test in 1978, two sober-minded Swedish feminists were disappointed to find most of the thirteen Moscow women they interviewed leading disadvantaged lives, the problems of which they faced passively, without political interest. The exceptions were the young psychologist and a middle-aged Party member, both committed to Marxist-Leninism. All agreed Soviet woman's lot was hard, but neither suffering nor education would spur the majority to press for change. Most preferred, in effect, to drop out.

The burdens of Soviet equality are well-known and reduce the chances of a happy life dramatically. Women work, raise children, do cleaning and shopping and run husbands, and not a single social or economic institution works in their favour. They get paid less than men for doing jobs with little responsibility, their children are endlessly sick because of bad day care, and the apartments they live in are often cramped, primitively equipped and communal. It is mainly women who queue every day for the shoddy goods and food the economy turns up unpredictably. For most women the choice between working and staying at home with young children is difficult and painful. The family needs the money, but pays a high price in sacrificing maternal health and enjoyment.

Births are declining and the divorce rate is high. Women are deterred from having children by the social and economic difficulties but

bad contraception precludes choice. Their lives are haunted by the fear of another abortion. Both termination and childbirth are notoriously painful since the economic plan does not include painkillers.

The result of all this is terrible fatigue, and yet men rarely help except with token jobs at weekends. In marriage they expect service and "femininity". The women blame themselves for their miserable lives, while dreaming of a larger apartment or a part-time job. Never do they enslave the system. These interviews were unofficial, but could have been given officially without overstepping the mark in most cases, so deeply have these women's personal views been penetrated by official thinking that at heart the state is doing its best.

Moscow women, it seems, do not want to get together and take action to improve their lives. They want what their husbands want for them, to be "feminine". The ideal of a softer, more patient, more graceful, prettier self, with tidier clothes and makeup, appears over and over again. The ideals these vulnerable women envisage for themselves are in striking contrast to the rough-mannered, uncultivated and often uncaring society they live in. This idea seems to be that women should strive to deliver the very best that makes their lives wretched, and to be an extraordinary one to find among the ideological rubble. Moreover, it is evident they feel honoured by their ultimate feminine burden, though none says so consciously.

Although the Interviews are necessarily competitive, this is a stimulating look at its feminist intelligence and the more general political insights it provides. While Soviet society itself is confused, superstitious citizens quest for ideas to maintain the status quo and avoidably misleads them on important aspects of western social progress, like the Pill (too many Soviet women confuse its side-effects with thyroidism). It has clearly bred in its women a widespread disbelief in the efficacy of public action. By implication the prime movers are still men.

Taking the broad view

Peter Howell

GILBERT HIGHET
Classical Papers
Edited by Robert J. Ball.
381pp. Columbia University Press. \$45.50.
0231 051042

"Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. The same is Highet. I was reading Toyabes this morning while shaving." So, we gather from Robert Ball's biographical sketch, Gilbert Highet would, "with the presence of a Sir Laurence Olivier", begin one of "the most dazzling, the most brilliant, and the most organized lectures imaginable". After an outstanding career at Glasgow and Oxford Universities, he was invited to Columbia University, where he became Professor of Greek and Latin in 1938, at the age of thirty-two.

A man of the most astonishing breadth of culture, covering not only the classics but the whole of Western literature, Highet seems to have been a devoted and charismatic teacher, while his publications, as listed in the bibliography at the back of this volume, cover almost thirty pages. However, when one examines the list in detail, it turns out to be rather curious. It starts with nineteen books, of which the first is a translation, made jointly with his wife, Helen MacInnes (better known as "the queen of the spy writers"), of O. Kiefer's *Sexual Life in Ancient Rome*, an extraordinarily prudish and almost useless book. The third is also a joint translation, of G. Mayer's *Friedrich Engels: A biography* – a strange choice. Otherwise the list includes one more translation, two textbooks, and six collections of essays.

The remaining eleven books, however, represent a substantial achievement. Highet possessed a notably elegant and fluent prose style, and a skill to organizing and presenting his material which enabled him to wear his learning lightly. The problem was that he could all too easily be carried away by his own eloquence. His most significant book on a strictly classical subject, *Juvenal the Satirist* (1954), is vitiated by being based on a reconstruction of the poet's life which is now generally regarded as false. Consequently it has the reputation of being a work whose extensive notes are of much greater value than the text. Similarly, one of Highet's most popular books, *Poets in a Landscape* (1957) – "an examination of seven Roman poets . . . against the backgrounds of

the places where they lived" – is compelling reading, but in many respects misleading.

The remainder of the bibliography consists of three pages of articles written for undergraduate journals, some fourteen pages of reviews of amazingly heterogeneous books, six pages of articles developed from his 283 weekly radio talks on literature, as well as two pages of articles on classics and the classical tradition. The present volume contains thirty of these. At first sight they appear to be an odd selection, ranging from a forty-page piece on "Speech and Narrative in the *Aeneid*" to a half-page article on an emendation in Quintilian, from "Lexical Notes on Dio Chrysostom" to "A Memorandum: From Seneca to Tennessee Williams". But in fact they turn out to be virtually all of Highet's classical papers that had not already been published in books. Three have never been published previously: a substantial (and esoteric) piece on "Mutations in Dio Chrysostom", and two minor pieces on a proposed emendation in the *Moretum* and on Camus and the Myth of Sisyphus.

It is difficult to know how many readers will find this bizarre collection worth owning: for example, those who appreciate the translation of Menander's *Dyskolos*, the piece on Lucilius, or the article "Whose *Satyricon*? Petronius's or Fellini's?", will not make much of the technical articles on textual criticism, lexicography, or Latin verse style.

The point is, of course, to pay tribute to Highet himself. However, reading through these disparate pieces it is difficult not to conclude that their author was too easily carried away by his own passionate desire to relate classical literature to the subsequent European tradition, and indeed to contemporary life, and as a result failed to see that literature within its own context. More particularly, he was determined to impose his own moral viewpoint. One might even suspect that his puritanism led him to justify his own delight in such improper authors as Petronius and Juvenal by insisting that they were really (despite all evidence to the contrary) serious moralists. By contrast, Horace, whom Highet much disliked (along with Plato and Julius Caesar), is reprimanded for being too lax on sin. Highet's lack of interest in Horace must explain the erroneous statement – an extraordinary one to make in 1974 – that his *Epistles* were "genuine personal letters". All in all, this is a valedictory salute which slightly misfires.

Early Kentish

John Wachter

ALEC DETSCAS
The Cantlac
219pp. Gloucester: Alan Sutton.
£9.95 (paperback, £5.95).
086299 117X

It is six years since the last volume in this series of "Peoples of Roman Britain" appeared, in which time Duckworth have abandoned it to Alan Sutton, very much to its benefit. This handsomely produced volume makes the earlier ones appear even less attractive. The series is a useful one, but since each volume has a different author, care must be taken to ensure basic common standards, and also the level of readability aimed at. As far as the latter is concerned, Alec Detscas is, from the first, completely uncompromising, quoting untranslated passages in both Latin and Greek.

Mr Detscas has otherwise written an enormously readable and useful book, as might be expected from someone so well versed in Roman Kent, who edits the County archaeological journal. The arrangement of the subjects, chapter by chapter, follows that of the earlier volumes in the series: tribal territory and the pre-Roman Iron Age, history AD 43-367, communications and urban settlement, rural settlement, industry and economy, the late fourth and fifth centuries. There is also a very full and helpful bibliography, while the illustrations have been carefully chosen and beautifully prepared, even if some of the line-drawings are a little over-reduced; the important map of Cantlacan territory on p 34 almost requires a magnifying glass to read the key, and

it would be useful for those ignorant of Kentish geography to be able to refer to a map locating the sites mentioned in the text.

It would be surprising if no contentious issues were raised, although in most instances Detscas's arguments are sound and make use of up-to-date information from recent excavations, such as those at Canterbury. He quite rightly argues here the case for Roman gates on the sites of the medieval Burgate and Westgate, but fails to tackle the intriguing point of why the London Road, on emerging from the Westgate, continues its course in a straight line for some 500 metres before making its sharp turn west towards London. There is also confusion over Walling Street. As a native Canterburyan, I can assure Detscas that the name – a post-Roman one – should be more correctly attached to the Dover road, as testified by the course of its modern successor in the city, and not to the Richborough road.

Equally, it is dangerous to argue, on the evidence of one pottery kiln, that an earlier and different boundary to the town wall existed round the southern quarter of the town. Pottery kilns are known elsewhere inside town boundaries, even though there were some times regulations forbidding this.

On rural matters, the classes of settlement adopted by Detscas are a little over-simplified, with the distinction between farmsteads, farms and villas appearing artificially sharp. We know so little about the interrelationship of these different categories, or about the large variations which must have occurred within each, that it is perhaps misleading to draw rigid lines of separation. It is better to see a continuous development, from the surviving native-style farm to the most opulent villa.

Additions to the pile

Niall Rudd

TONY WOODMAN and DAVID WEST (Editors)
Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus
262pp. Cambridge University Press. £25.
0521 245532

In this third welcome collection from the firm of Woodman and West, R.G.M. Nisbet argues persuasively that Horace's ninth epode is a running commentary on the battle of Actium based on observation. I.M. Le M. Du Quesnay turns a powerful beam on the first book of Horace's *Satires* in search of political propaganda. Y. Nadeau believes that the Aristaeus episode in the fourth georgic is "an allegory of Augustus, Antony and Cleopatra, and Actium". Tony Woodman treats *Odes* 3.1 (*Odiphanum*) as a subtle reinforcement of Augustus's social programme. E. L. Harrison shows that in Virgil's poetic conception of Roman history Juno does not abandon Carthage until the later stages of the second Punic war. T.P. Wiseman describes how the emperor sought to make the Great Mother an orderly Augustan divinity by incorporating her shrine into his building scheme on the Palatine – a policy reflected in the *Aeneid*. Francis Cairns interprets Propertius's poem on Actium (4.6) as a sincere eulogy of Augustus presented in the form of a choric hymn. J. C. McKeown notes how in the *Fasti* Ovid has failed to integrate his encomiastic passages into the style of a Hellenistic neologism poem. David West adds a perceptive note on the Gollus fragment. All in all, an impressive collection. It may reassure the scholar writing in the current number of *Latomus* who complains that recent thinking on Augustan poetry is "a lugubrious morass".

To an outsider (if I may affect a slightly spurious detachment) the book seems to typify the strengths of British academic writing on Latin poetry. The aim of each paper is to establish a truth (sometimes quite a small one) by reasoning correctly on the appropriate evidence; the thesis is clearly defined. This technique, accepted for centuries but now under attack, does not, of course, ensure that all the essays are equally convincing; but it does mean that when the reader disagrees he knows why. For example, although the interpretation of the Aristaeus episode mentioned above seems highly unlikely, the writer's procedure is so lucid that one can see where the rings fail to form a chain. The same outsider might observe that the empirical approach involves one or two methodisms and a few general limitations (from which the reviewer claims no exemption). Since the knowledge gained is believed to be cumulative, writers are keen to establish what they personally are adding to the pile. Hence the tendency to magnify disagreements and to call attention to originality, real or imagined, with a verbal fanfare ("What scholars have signally failed to grasp is the crucial fact that..."). In a few cases this is accompanied by continual reference to one's own publications.

Critics of the method point out that Latinists almost never theorize about the study of literature; and it is true that by training and temperament they are most at home when elucidating a problem of sense or structure or history. Again, to a Latinist "criticism" has commonly meant judging one textual reading against another rather than evaluating poems. Broadly speaking, it is assumed that the poets' relative merits have been settled long ago. So while, say, Guy Lea may well persuade us that Tibullus is sharper and more lively than we thought, that does not entail promoting him to the class occupied by Horace and Ovid, much less to the level of Virgil. It follows that most of what Latinists write about poetry is not strictly criticism but rather inquiry, analysis, comparison, or interpretation. One may doubt whether this is a serious defect.

What can hardly be doubted is the fact that the stress laid on evidence and argument has led to a rather austere intellectualism. Whatever their private response, Latinists rarely show much pleasure in the poetry they discuss. It is perhaps significant that the exceptions which come to mind over recent years, from Gilbert Highet and Patrick Wilkinson up to Richard Jenkyns, have often been more interested in describing qualities than in proving a case. In the more investigational kind of scholarship it seems that to express admiration or delight is felt to be, if not vulgar or self-indulgent, at least irrelevant to the task in hand. The same goes for humour. If one may judge from personal acquaintances, good scholars are often far from humourless; yet the best articles usually call for the reader's unremitting concentration. Only lightweight provide light relief.

If these are shortcomings, there are some worthwhile compensations. Since British Latinists pursue no esoteric doctrine or any pseudo-science, they have no need of jargon; the resources of ordinary English are quite sufficient. Instead of equating mystification with profundity, they see it as a sign of woolly-mindedness and conceit, even if it is written in French. As they decline to enter into "creative collaboration with the poet" they cannot be accused of running away with his book. And since they assume that all readers are equal citizens of the *res publica litterarum* they never think of what they do in terms of class distinctions; thus they are not impressed with the strange idea that the value of what a critic says varies (inversely) with the level of his social origins.

Although Latinists are now a very tiny group, they still bring diverse interests to bear on poetic texts – interests to language, politics, and the history of ideas as well as to poetry itself. They are not frozen in some antiquated Edwardian posture. In spite of their indifference to theory they have assimilated the most important ideas current in English studies in the past thirty years, and one of their number (Francis Cairns) has revived and elaborated a method which has aroused interest outside classical circles. What we need now (if I may step back into the chorus) is someone in his thirties who is clear-headed enough to sift Continental ideas and sufficiently patriotic to show us which, if any, are useful for our purpose.

Phaidon Brings Back a Classic

THE PORTRAITS OF THE GREEKS

G. M. A. Richter

Abridged and revised by R. R. R. Smith

THE PORTRAITS OF THE GREEKS was praised at the time of its first publication in three volumes in 1965 as possibly G. M. A. Richter's greatest contribution to the study of Greek art. Two years before she died she began work on a single-volume abridged edition, and this has now been further revised and updated to include the fruits of academic research carried out since her death. The republication of this standard work will be welcomed by art historians and students of Classical antiquity throughout the world.

265 x 195 mm, 256 pp, 312 illustrations
0 7148 2326 0 July 1984 £25.00



Johannes 1984

Outside Osweicim

- 1
Let me tell you the story of days, handsomely printed
in dawn and darkness, in sleep
and in burnt-eyed longing for sleep.
- 2
It puzzles the secular light, this polyphony
of dim cries. I wasn't there, I heard nothing,
yet the air is so full of them, I could sing them all.
- 3
When the train banged to a stop and whispered "where?",
then they began. Some rose, some fell. The sky
rushed in like sea, we opened our mouths, it drank us.
- 4
It is hard to lose everything, harder to despair.
Those words on the gate, some dreamed about them, loved
to walk in their shade, suck out the iron of their promise.
- 5
In the night, the bright light; in the wire, the stopped heart;
in the eye, fear; in the crust, hunger;
in the pustule, the flea; in the world, Osweicim.
- 6
Dumb narrative curiosity keeps you from the wire
how many times? You watch yourself, amazed,
whipped to a panting run past outstretched arms.
- 7
Death's clever, he has maths and capital,
but life's a tough nut, a phlegmy knot,
and nearly chokes him, like his Prussian collar.
- 8
They wanted us corpses and they wanted us
grave-diggers, they wanted us music, machines, textiles.
They kicked us as we fell. How human they were.
- 9
In was Erev Shabbat, evil was fallible.
A shaved girl smiled in the sun. An angel had murmured
"Amen" before he saw the gesturing dead.
- 10
And what if his Lord had heard that some of them
were raging animals, and still sent day-break, still
sent no one to stroke them with their names?
- 11
No, no, the question is obsolete.
Nothing sees nothing. Mercy was down to us.
Our mouths jammed shut on nothing.

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- 12
Emblem, exhibit, witness - Husserl's suitcase
flanked the rust-brown pile. The cold twine of its handle
I touch, then grasp, for a faceless, weightless stanza.
- 13
Child, enchanted at gun-point, whose child are you?
Come here, take off your cap, don't cry.
How is it possible I can make no difference?
- 14
Oh they crowd in, death's kindergarten. Small grazes
scared them once. Their eyes are always yours.
I'd take their pain, here, where your absence is.
- 15
I loved in you, yes, what made you strangest.
The desert gave you its shadows. I'd watch for ever
the poise of your smile, its bland, half-mocking stillness.
- 16
Another race is only another, strolling
on the far side of our skin, badged with his weather.
In love or hate we cast looks, hooks; get it wrong.
- 17
How shall I bear your indifference without hate?
It stirs in the dust, a length of hose. If I burn
how shall I not flex my whip near your eyes?
- 18
No, come away, put on that riddled cloth
of the centuries, be ash and stone, your stare
like his, a star.
- 19
They beckoned, they turned their limbs this way and that,
they whispered, you tried to get near enough to hear,
but the heat roared at you - take your eyes and run.
- 20
Not "the six million", not "the holocaust",
not words that mass-produce, but names. One name;
Husserl's, perhaps. His favourite food, his new watch.
- 21
Where death's made now, you must wear protective clothing.
Yes, we are still perfecting the science of last things.
Our blaze will be the best yet. Will you drink to it?

- 22
Chosen to illustrate the idiot's tale;
an illumination from the Book of Fire,
Sand and Next Year; chosen to be most mortal,

our pyramid swam and sank through the nitrogen
fog as starving crystals ate our air.
Christ, to whom the soldier said "Go on,

call down your god if he's got ears and brains",
you would have understood our short-breathed terror.
Poor rebel son, you also wore our chains
in dumb commitment to the tribal error.

So we died for the last unforgeable scrap
- ourselves. Got free for being something harder
even than zoo-meat. Fought like the Crusader
to nail our resurrection to the map.

- 23
I died for nothing, no one. I was eighteen;
knew how to love, forgot; was beautiful,
then not. The train slides on across my shadow.

CAROL RUMENS

Marginality theories

Chris Baldick

DAVID TROTTER
The Making of the Reader: Language and
subjectivity in modern American, English and
Irish poetry
272pp. Macmillan. £20.
0333 306325

Milton asked it of his Urania: fit audience find
though few, but drive far off the barbarous
dissonance of Bacchus and his revellers. Later
writers may have found Bacchus to be the least
of their worries, but the difficulty of identifying
a minority of discerning readers among an in-
creasingly anonymous mass of idle and promiscu-
ous browsers has come to stand as the central
problem of the poet's relation to the public in
both the Romantic and the Modernist
phases of the English-speaking tradition. Since
Wordsworth, the search has been undertaken
less for the Common Reader than for the un-
common, the reader who could be relied upon
to read for the right reasons. In the absence of
institutional or Uranian assistance Words-
worth and his successors had to trust to their
own rhetorical techniques to repel the unwell-
come and to single out a responsible élite.

The problem is at the centre of modern literary
history, but not of David Trotter's *The*
Making of the Reader, which can fairly be de-
scribed as a de-centred work combining at least
three major lines of argument and investiga-
tion along with several minor excursions. It is a
wide-ranging and constantly stimulating survey
of themes and rhetorical devices in poetry
from Wordsworth to Ashbery and Hoaney in
which the problem of finding an adequate
readership provides an intermittent element of
continuity. That there should be no command-
ing centre to this work is quite appropriate to
its critical procedures, since Dr Trotter is un-
usually preoccupied by the idea of marginality.

In at least two senses. Marginal annotation
offers him a model of the constraints placed by
the poetic text upon the reader's response -
complementary but restricted by the central
block of type. More extensively and fruitfully
he examines the process by which reader-
ship of Romantic poetry is beckoned to an
imagined regenerative margin where a com-
mon humanity can be reconstituted outside the
social order. To this literary picnic or pilgrim-
age chosen readers have to make their own
way, their own dissenting commitment.

This survey of the marginal is one of the most

rewarding strands of argument offered here,
taking in both marginal zones (Coleridge's
America, the Soviet Union and Spain of the
1930s) and marginal figures (Wordsworth's
vagrants, Arnold's scholar gypsy, the old men
in Tennyson and Eliot, the heroic aviators of
Yeats and Auden). Still more impressive is
Trotter's account of the rhetorical devices by
which the appropriate reader is lured to the
margin. This account focuses upon modes of
reference, from Wordsworth's frequent pro-
nominal "this" or "that", to Auden's addiction
to the definite article. In their different ways
these tiny verbal traps entice us as readers with
a promise of specificity, but leave us to fulfil it
instead. Eliot's demonstratives align us care-
fully within a neurotic pattern of intimacy and
remoteness, while Auden's definite articles in-
vite a knowing circle of politically committed
readers to supply the references from their own
experience. Auden later came to refer to his
use of definite articles in his early verse as a
"disease", which seems unduly harsh until one
realizes, with the help of Trotter's excellent
analysis, just how firmly implicated this device
was in the political rhetoric of the 1930s. The
same keen eye for political shifts within poets'
changes of rhetorical habit is shown in passages
on Mussolini and the style of Pound's *Cantos*,
on Eliot and eugenics, and on Larkin's
response to the "Wilsonian mayhem" of the
1960s.

A key to the strengths of this work can be
found in its closing pages, where a timely anxi-
ety is expressed about the disturbing promi-
nence given to metaphor and simile in the
teaching of poetry in schools, at the expense of
genre and poetic convention. Trotter's stance
is one of more or less silent dissent from the
two great preoccupations of the imagery boom
in mid-century criticism: metaphor and myth.
From metaphor he turns to humbler objects of
verbal analysis - articles and demonstratives:
from myth he has us turn to the neglected
critical uses of ritual, interpreting the Roman-
tic pilgrim to the margins of society as a rite
of passage. It is a form of dissent which pro-
duces instant rewards, among the most exciting
of which is a fresh reading of Eliot's "A Game
of Chess" through the perspective of Freudian
connections between ritual and onanism and
in the context of contemporary debates on birth
control. Here and elsewhere in the book, Trot-
ter exercises a tendency to hoard unusual anec-
dotal clues and connections, in something like
the manner of Walter Benjamin. We are given
Pound and Hemingway boxing in Paris, Eliot

prodding concert-goers with the end of his
broily, and many more curiosities. The manner
is always engaging, but brings problems which
appear spectacularly when Trotter reflects
upon the importance of the syllable *da* in mod-
ern culture, as used not just by Rilke, Heideg-
ger, the Dadaists and the thunder in *The Waste*
Land but by Freud's infant grandson in a
frenzy of maternal deprivation. To this treasur-
ing of coincidences one is obliged to say *nyet*.

Doubts of a different kind need to be reg-
istered when Trotter expands on the claim im-
plicit in his book's title and outlines the three
successive strategies (rhetorical, political, in-
stitutional) for the "making" of the reader. His
interest in the first of these distorts a sober
assessment of the real relative weights of the
three factors. Even during the 1930s, when
politically-created readerships for poetry wore
at their height, "it was the poets who turned to
the definite article who set their mark on the
decade". This is both very true and very mis-
leading, as a later throwaway remark seems to
acknowledge: "Nowadays it takes more than a
handful of doctored articles to identify a read-
ership." It always did take more than that, of
course: readers may be found, finely tuned or
even profoundly adjusted by individual poets
or particular turns of phrase, but they are made
by much larger processes involving the politics
of literacy, publishing, literary celebrity and
criticism. Wordsworth, Arnold, Eliot and
others studied here could not and did not rely
on syntax alone to attract readers fit to read
their poetry in the right way, but resorted to
literary criticism.

If, in this sense, some readers are made,
many others have roasting thrust upon them.
Readerships made in the academy and reputa-
tions made by the reading-list Trotter sees as
the distinctive features of the post-war literary
world, although they need to be dated further
back than that. There are interesting pages
here on the institutional reader, but their frag-
mentary nature allows the notion of the rhetori-
cally "made" readership more ground than it
should be allowed. What is really at issue is a
process whereby readers are beckoned or
nudged into position, caajoled into adopting the
poet's view. All this is finely analysed. It would
take several books to show, with due attention
to institutional factors, how readers are made,
and David Trotter is hardly to be accused for
failing to write them all at once, when he has
already crowded a great deal of critical wit and
wisdom into this one rewarding volume.

A kind of openness

Neil Corcoran

MICHAEL SCHMIDT (Editor)
Some Contemporary Poets of Britain and
Ireland
184pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £9.95
(paperback, £4.50).
08535 4694

Although he never actually mentions it by
name, Michael Schmidt's preface to this an-
thology of eighteen poets clearly takes issue
with the terminology and judgments of the
introduction to the *Penguin Book of Contem-
porary British Poetry*, edited by Blake Morris-
son and Andrew Motion. That anthology, at
least in part an apology for the Maritians, was
scathingly reviewed by Schmidt in an editorial
of his journal, *PN Review*. Unfortunately, the
review was much sharper, wittier and more
telling in its hostilities than the present preface
is convincing in its enthusiasms. One can under-
stand that Schmidt would not want to yoke his
own anthology, which was not originally plan-
ned as a *response* to the *Penguin*, too firmly to
this argument but it would nevertheless have
been useful to see him expanding his attack on
the "self-congratulatory facility" of some of the
poets included there, and elaborating further
his scepticism about the word "ludic" which, in
the review, he gleefully pounced on for its
potential implications of competitiveness,
rather than the more innocently wide-eyed
playfulness Motion and Morrison intended to
suggest.

What militates against a more spiritedly parti-
sans preface and anthology is Schmidt's desire

to produce an untried, more critically "open"
selection than he found the *Penguin* to be. In
practice, this openness admits seven poets also
included there: Doris Mahon, James Fenton,
Andrew Motion, Peter Scupham, Jeffrey
Wainwright, Tony Harrison and Tom Paulin.
The anthology has, thereby, its quota of out-
standing poems: Mahon's "A Disused Shed in
Co. Wexford", Fenton's "A German Requiem",
Motion's "Anne Frank Huis", Harrison's
"The Nuptial Torches" and "Continuous".

Schmidt's is a peculiar kind of openness,
however, since it shuts out, among others, Seamus
Heaney, Michael Longley, Paul Muldoon and
Craig Raine. Raine's exclusion was his
own decision, not Schmidt's, made publicly in
the pages of *PN Review*, but the exclusion of
the Irish writers is extraordinary in an an-
thology whose otherwise self-deprecating title
seems to bow in their direction. This B&F ferry
lists heavily to the dismarion shore: Ireland is
very much the "other country" of Andrew
Waterman's allanated-sympathetic poem in-
cluded here; Belfast is the city which Andrew
Motion can be seen "leaving" in one of his
poems. Hoaney may have been omitted only
because he appears in Schmidt's previous
anthology, *Eleven British Poets*, or - improb-
ably, on the face of it - because Schmidt thinks
he "notably matured" before 1970. But this is
speculation: the preface does not so much as
mention Hoaney's name. The explanation for
this omission, and for the omission of Mul-
doon, could hardly fail to be of interest.

In some of the poets he does include, Schmidt
admires a "Victorian" quality, a "civic" re-
sponsibility and an "Arnoldian earnestness".

I would very much like to have seen him taking
the opportunity to define and illustrate "civic",
a favourite word, at some length (in what pre-
cise ways is it to be distinguished from "social"
or "political"?). The Arnoldian reference
perhaps points up a genuine catholicity in the
anthology since Schmidt includes Mahon's
"An Image from Beckett" which is ironic at the
expense of, and possibly elegiac about, "sweet-
ness and light". The work of Dick Davis,
Robert Wells and Clive Wilmer (why is Neil
Powell not here, incidentally?) may, however,
be thought to have a "Victorian" restraint and
decorum. It is a Victorianism inherited from
Yvor Winters, probably, and for all its virtues
of quiet, honest meticulousness, this seems to
be the trouble with it.

It is probably for this reason that, of the
other poets in the book - David Constantine,
Jeremy Hooker, Gillian Clarke, Alison
Brackenbury, Frank Kuppner, Michael Hof-
mann and John Ash - it is the latter two who
make the strongest impression. Schmidt, who
dislikes (with some justification) the *Penguin*
editors' use of the term "post-modern", will
allow it in this anthology only to Ash; but
Hofmann's elliptical, disenchanted, deadpan
pieces, forever approaching and veering away
from epigrammatic terseness, surely have the
already "post-modern" *Notebook/History*
poems of Lowell in their anaemic blood. Ash's
work seems to be indebted to that of his near-
namesake, John Ashbery, in its meditative-
riddling quality and its amused, half-distracted
surrealism; but his poems resist the intelligence
less successfully than Ashbery's, and have a
more apprehensible-social reality floating just
below the dazzling surface.

Organically
linked

David Craig

HARVEY OXENHORN
Elemental Things: The poetry of Hugh
MacDiarmid
215pp. Edinburgh University Press. £15.
085224 4754

Harvey Oxenhorn's judgment is more or less
unerring. He sorts out MacDiarmid's most
finely achieved work from the uncertain and
the plain dross, evaluates it in comparison with
other modern masters (Pound, Joyce, Eliot,
Frost, Stevens), and brings in as many facts of
biography and social history as are necessary to
explain the poet's growth.

Elemental Things amounts to a completely
intelligent account of MacDiarmid's poetry;
not hard to do for the earlier and more accessi-
ble "golden lyrics" but colling more on original
thought as MacDiarmid's work moves into the
1930s and undergoes great changes, throwing
up on the one hand heaps of undigested matter
from other people's books and on the other
hand the philosophical or reflective poems,
often in long Yeats-like stanzas, which were
virtually unavailable after publication in 1931-
35 until the 1970 *Penguin Selected Poems*.

Oxenhorn appreciates the poetry of that
phase, calling it "more innovative and accom-
plished than anything he had previously
achieved". It is a relief, after years of frustra-
tion, to read a critic who sees poems like "Har-
ry Somen", "Water of Life", and "The Soam-
less Garment" for what they are: a body of
invaluable poems as organically linked as those
in *The Tower* or a book of *The Prelude*. His
challenging and convincing comparisons of
MacDiarmid with Wordsworth and Frost are
typical of the book in being able to focus wide
knowledge where it is needed, and being at
once independent-minded and responsible.

Oxenhorn's critical touch rarely falters, but
he is ponderous on "Farmer's Death" and
seems to miss the high quality of "By
Wauchope'side", classing it wrongly among the
diversiscentis philologies. Criticism of Mac-
Diarmid's poetry requires full quotation, care-
ful sorting, placing (not as a publicist's gesture
but with justification) in the twentieth-century
canon, as well as strenuous scholarly exegesis.
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thirty leaden books on MacDiarmid no doubt
now gestating, but it deserves to.

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American notes

Christopher Hitchens

In his recent essay, "A Kidnapped West or Culture Bows Out", Milan Kundera writes that:

America was born at about the same time as the Europe of the Modern era: America is the "child" of the Modern era. Nevertheless, the definition of the Modern era as the period when culture becomes the embodiment of the supreme values by which Europeans understand themselves, define themselves, identify themselves as European, does not seem to me to apply entirely to America.

There are no such figures as Descartes or Cervantes, Pascal or Rembrandt in the very foundations of America. For a long time its culture remained provincial and, most important, without any representativeness. Mozart embodied the very spirit of Austria, just as Dvořák symbolized the Czech homeland. Victor Hugo or Paul Valéry are representatives of France, as Goethe and Thomas Mann speak for Germany, if not all of Europe. Faulkner, as great an artist as he might be, could never claim such a representativeness for himself.

Alfred Kazin, in his latest book, *An American Procession* (Knopf), might not make such large claims for his subjects. But he provides an enthralling argument, in his exploration of American sensibility from Emerson to Fitzgerald, for a "Great Tradition". In the literary century that commenced with Emerson's "nature", and ended in the swamps of dogmatism and war, Mr Kazin discerns a rich humanism and a strong, sceptical, democratic and individual consistency. His title is drawn from Whitman, who said of Emerson that he was "the actual beginner of the whole procession" and that, though the national letters might generate "more vehement and luxuriant" characters, they would not transcend him as the maker and the original.

Kazin's preference is for the singular: the writer who has to begin all over again. This obviously presents difficulties to those who wish to discern or trace a continuity. But perhaps the problem is more apparent than real. The sheer size of the United States, and the chaotic variety of its people and locations, allowed for considerable innovation and experiment among writers. Idiosyncrasy did not have to be conscious — there was room for Twain and Melville and for their vastly differing encounters with realities that could with equal justice be termed American.

A native advantage not mentioned by Kundera is the relative freedom which American writers have enjoyed from what Europeans dearly call "elitism". Able to draw upon the settled societies of the Old World, and able even to envy them, they were none the less capable of viewing them from an angle. Even in the extreme case of Henry James, Kazin argues, there are aspects that are "true to American virtuosity". In *The Portrait of a Lady*, published in 1881, an American says to his father:

"I want to make her rich."
"What do you mean by rich?"
"I call people rich when they're able to meet the requirements of their imagination."

Kazin notes here that "Americans, precisely because they were humdrum, middle-middle in the tame bourgeois style that gave James so stimulus to imagination, and socially innocent, were purer than other people." It might be going too far to say that purity is one of Mr Kazin's themes; but he certainly makes the most out of the freshness of America, and the opportunity of it. "Essentialness", in this context, comes precisely because of the coincidence of America with Modernism, and because of the country's unusual ability to act as a register of later developments (even such inchoate and unsatisfying definitions as "post-modernism" seeming, here, to have a reality). Since books must be written by individuals, there may appear to be something tautologous in Kazin's insistence on the author as lone wolf or, to borrow Herman Melville's word, *isolato*. But his chapter about Nathaniel Hawthorne is very sensitive to the idea of detachment in America, especially so when one reflects how antithetical Hawthorne's cynicism must be to one so genially engaged as Mr Kazin. Hawthorne found the idea of the United States too large and grandiose for acceptance. He could not bring himself to care about the outcome of the Civil War, and regarded New England as "as large a lump of earth as my heart can hold". In this refusal of national identity, and insis-

ence on local and specific loyalty (Hawthorne was reminded by the Civil War of European despotism, and despised Abraham Lincoln) one can see that "essentialness" need not be universal or all-embracing. The world of puritanism and superstition, and the author's reverence for memory and tradition, are sufficient unto the day, and do not lack for essence. Nor are they by any means divorced from Europe, as Kundera seems to imply. "Provincial" is pejorative only when applied to the mentality. It need not be a condemnation when it is a matter of confinement or attachment to a specific place (else Kundera's Czech settings would seem repetitive) and Kazin has done well, in his work on Twain and Dreiser as well as Hawthorne and Fitzgerald, to emphasize that the context of the United States will always require this proviso.

If any one author is mere of a lone wolf than another, it is Norman Mailer. But he looks like being anointed on July 11 as the next President of the PEN American Center. It may be difficult to imagine Mr Mailer as a committee man or spokesman for consensus, but he has been a member of the organization since 1949 and has served more than once on its executive board. Past Presidents of the organization read rather like lists of Nobel laureates — alternating between those who have heard of and those who have not. Mr Mailer can take pleasure in succeeding Bernard Malamud, Jerzy Kosiński and Henry Steele Commager, with Booth Tarkington as the first President. His recent visit to the Soviet Union delayed the announcement of his candidacy lest the Russians assume the worst about the trip, but there now seems no obstacle to his being gazetted next week.

"Our Mr Tilley" is the house name for the lorgnette-wielding, butterfly-scrutinizing, top-hat-sporting figure who, annually, adorns the cover of the *New Yorker* as he did its inaugural edition. A recent cartoon in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* showed this worthy stereotype with a sprouting Pinocchio nose. What could have prompted such indecency? What, for the matter of that, could have prompted the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* to devote front-page stories and (in the case of the *New York Times*) a pompous editorial to Mr Tilley's doings? The answer, which is still making some citizens stamp their feet and whistle when they talk of it, is that a *New Yorker* writer has admitted to employing what he calls "composites". Allister Reid, a favourite among the magazine's regular contributors, has been publishing well-crafted pieces from the Hispanic world since 1951. A few years ago, he gave a talk to the student body of an American university. In which he allowed that, on occasion, he had improved on the banality of fact. A conversation in one Barcelona bar had actually been overheard in Pamplona, while a taxi-driver in another corner of Spain had perhaps had put into his mouth the thoughts of another friend of Mr Reid's. Stuff like that. Present in the audience was Ms Joane Lipman who has oow, having pupated as a reporter herself, spilled all those beans. It seems that Mr Reid, in one article about a Yale graduation, referred to "a flinty old friend from the country" who attended the ceremony to honour his grandniece. But the flinty old friend was Mr Reid himself, who was actually there to see his own son get the cap and gown. On another occasion, reporting an appearance by Czesław Miłosz at New York University, Mr Reid disfigured himself as "a crusty old friend from the country" in order to give his own words and thoughts the authority of the second or third person singular.

It is hard to describe the tidal wash of rubbish sanctimony that has been generated by this incident. A certain amount of petty Schadenfreude seems to be involved, because the *New Yorker* makes rather a thing of its legendary "fact-checking" department (the one that once made Truman Capote confirm the colour of a railway engine before it would "pass" in *Cold Blood*). Mr Reid himself has acted with such charming insouciance in the matter that his critics are aghast. "Facts", he avers, "are only a part of reality. If one wants to

write about Spain, the facts won't get you anywhere." "Fictional facts", bellows the *New York Times*, "are forever counterfeit."

Perhaps it is wrong to look for meaning in this row, or for significance in its promotion to the front page of the nation's most respected journals. Nobody suggests that Mr Reid intended to deceive, or even that the picture emerging from his composites was misleading. But there is an almost palpable fear of licence: a kind of neurosis about being playful or even imaginative. It is as if "facts" and "givens" were the still centre of the turning world, and that mere anarchy would result from any paltering. American newspapers have long failed to answer the question, "where is the knowledge we have lost in information?" With their heavy-handed pursuit of Mr Reid, they show that they know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

So, out all arguments about accuracy are arguments about veracity. But some are, and have to be. Last year I wrote about the awful possibility that the lawsuit brought by Lillian Hellman against Mary McCarthy might actually come to court. The suit involved, like most of the worst litigation, a question of libel. As the entire eastern seaboard has known since February 1980, Mary McCarthy appeared on a TV chat-show and said of the plaintiff that "Every word she writes is a lie, including 'and' and 'the'." That was enough to get Ms Hellman's lawyers clamping and gobbling. But a recent forensic article may make the obvious hyperbole look rather more like pardonable exaggeration.

The argument about Hellman's truthfulness has resolved itself into a debate over the provenance of *Julia*, her most moving piece of writing and her most commercially successful masterpiece. Even those who only saw *Julia* played by Vanessa Redgrave will recall that she was a fortunate young American, who went from Oxford to Vienna to be analysed by Sigmund Freud, and who involved herself in anti-Nazi resistance. At one never-to-be-forgotten moment she incites Lillian Hellman to smuggle illegal funds into Germany in her hat. Later, after numerous privations, she dies in London. Ms Hellman's account, published in her 1973 collection, *Pentimento*, leaves no room for

doubt that the story is intended to be authentic, and that a mere handful of minor details have been altered in order to shield (from what, in 1973?) the innocent.

Now comes Sinauer McCracken of Boston University with a minute investigation of the *Julio* story. In the current issue of *Commentary* magazine (Volume 77, no 6), he shows the overly verifiable ingredient of the tale is false. Other writers and contemporaries of Hellman, such as Muriel Gardner and Martin Gellhorn, have challenged her account before. McCracken leaves it for dead. He has looked up the relevant Thomas Cook time tables and found that Hellman simply could not have made the famous terrifying train trip that she describes. He has checked the passenger lists on the ocean liners she says she took, and found that she was not among those present. He has gone into addresses and locales and found, not inconsistency but impossibility. Finally he makes a good case for saying that the whole *Julia* adventure was unnecessary in the first place, and that it may be no more than a fabric reworking of Muriel Gardiner's life story. This last allegation is one that Ms Hellman has always refused to discuss.

Ms Hellman's faction will not like the article which goes on to cite examples of her later scruple in the political world. They will say it is motivated by the dislike of her opinion which inspires the rest of the magazine. It won't quite do. At the least, such people might call upon their heroine to abandon the spurious libel suit she has brought against Mary McCarthy, which has been poisoning the lives of people who ought to be better occupied.

Lillian Hellman died after I had translated these paragraphs. There seemed no reason to leave them as they were. Her declaration of conscience should not be cut to fit the fashions is imperishable in any case, and it serves to survive her other legacies.

Formations, a new journal to be published thrice yearly by the University of Wisconsin Press, aims to provide "in context in which the arts can be understood in relation to each other". The first issue contains a special section on Czech writing and includes an essay by Jiří Hájek on the survival of Czech culture, edited by Josef Škvorecký, and an essay on Kundera by Milan Kundera. Information can be had from Journals Division, 114 N Murray St, Madison WI 53715, USA.

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Chris Baldick is the author of *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848-1932*, 1983. Sir Darrell Bata's most recent book, *The Fishodon Incident of 1898*, was published earlier this year. Keith Bosley's most recent collection of poems is *Saltions*, 1979. Archie Brown is a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. Peter Burke's most recent book is *Montaigne*, 1981. Lesley Chamberlain's *Food and Cooking of Russia* was published in 1982. Frank Cioffi is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Essex. Helen Cooper is the author of *The Structure of the Canterbury Tales*, 1983. Neil Corcoran is a lecturer in English at the University of Sheffield. David Craig's books include *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People 1680-1830*, 1982. Arthur C. Danto's most recent book is *The Transfiguration of the Communion*, 1981. Hilida Davidson is a Fellow of Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge. Denton Fox is a Professor of English at the University of Toronto. Tom Gallagher is a lecturer in Peace Studies at the University of Bradford. George Gombrich is a lecturer in Slavonic Studies at the University of Cambridge. Richard Gray is Professor of African History at the University of London. Christopher Hitchens's *Cyprus* has just been published. Brian Holmes's books include *Comparative Education: Some considerations of method*, 1981. J. L. Horden is a lecturer in New Testament Studies at King's College, London. Peter Howell is a lecturer in Latin at Bedford College, London. Douglas Johnson is Professor of French History at University College London. J. W. Jolliffe is Bodley's Librarian at the University of Oxford. Mary R. Lefkowitz's most recent books are *Heroines and Hysterics and The Lives of the Greek Poets*, 1981. E. J. Leyser's *Medieval Germany and its Neighbours 900-1250* was published earlier this year. John Lucas's most recent book is *Romantic Modern Literature: Essays and Ideas of Culture 1750-1900*, 1982. Robert A. McNell is responsible for Ibero-American materials in the Department of Printed Books of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. R. K. Narayan's novels include *God, Demons and Others*, 1965 and *The Painter of Signs*, 1971. Paula Newson's most recent book is an edition and translation of the Cornish mystery play *The Creation of the World*, 1983. Nicholas Orme's next book, *From Childhood to Chivalry*, will be published later this year. Niall Ridd is Professor of Classics at the University of Bristol. Carol Rumens's most recent collection of poems, *Sun Whisper*, was published earlier this year. Geoffrey Sampson's recent books include *Schools of Linguistics*, 1980. Barry Supple is Professor of Economic History at the University of Cambridge. Robert Towler is Head of Research at the Independent Broadcasting Authority. John Wachter is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Leicester. Bernard Wasserstein is Professor of History at Brandeis University. Blair Wexler is the author of *The Rump Parliament*, 1974, and editor of Edmund Ludlow's *A Voice from the Watch Tower*, 1978.

Letters

Freud and Modernism

Sir, — S. S. Prawer's review of E. H. Gombrich's *Tristram* (June 15) contains a serious misrepresentation: "[Gombrich] shows how seriously close Freud's rejection of Modernism brought him to theories of 'degenerate art' that were most fully formulated and applied in quarters wholly opposed to him and all he stood for." Two distortions are involved here, and the first is Gombrich's. The letter from Freud to Abraham of December 1922 that Gombrich quotes in full contains a joking and bantering comment on what Freud takes to be a caricatured portrait of Abraham, together with a stricture that "such artists should be the last to be allowed access to analytical circles". Gombrich's response to this letter is itself extreme and inappropriate ("Who would have expected to encounter here of all places an anticipation of the hatred against an allegedly degenerate art?"), but is in no sense a demonstration, or "showing". Your reviewer, having chosen to report half-truth by half-truth, freely uses phrases such as "committed disciple of Freud" and "detached from psychoanalysis and its jargon", whilst not finding himself free to cite a later Gombrich passage that more accurately represents both Gombrich's arguments, and Freud's attitude to what concerns all our freedoms: "In a beautiful essay on the position of Freud in recent intellectual history Thomas Mann... argues that Freud's psychoanalysis is the only manifestation of modern irrationalism which resists any attempt to misuse it for reactionary purposes. He was right that Freud's message... constitutes an appeal to human reason, but when Thomas Mann represented Freud as wholly isolated, he clearly overlooked Warburg." It is not only Freud who suffers from such repeated demonstrations by contemporary writers that psychoanalysis is something that they can hardly bear to read.

B. BURGOYNE
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'Contingent' Poetry

Sir, — When John Bayley (in his review of Anthony Thwaite's *Poems 1953-1983*, June 22) puts Thwaite and me in the company of Browning and Pound, as writers of "contingent" poetry, he pays us a high compliment, which is muffled only a little when he admits into the company also Wallace Stevens, whom few before Professor Bayley have thought of as having much in common with Browning. If Anthony Thwaite is lifted at being excluded from the first eleven of "essentialist" poets (Eliot, Auden, Larkin), he may care to take heart from Walter Savage Landor: "Regarding the occasional in poetry: is there less merit in taking and treating what is before us, than in seeking and wandering through an open field as we would for mushrooms?" Welcome to the club, Mr Thwaite! With Landor of the company, along with Pound and Browning, the conversation should sparkle; and the author of *The Stones of Empires* will hold his own there.

DONALD DAVIE
Omega Cottage, 4 High Street, Silvertown, near Exeter, Devon.

Robert Schumann

Sir, — In her review of Robert Schumann's *Tagebücher*, Baed III (May 18), Judith Cherniak repeats the frequently made assertion that Schumann had syphilis. This cannot remain unchallenged. Medical diagnosis in the nineteenth century was more art than science, and the laboratory tests needed for proving whether someone had syphilis were not available. The popular assumption that Schumann suffered from syphilis stems from publications by Grehlo (1906), Slater and Meyer (1959) Sams (1971) and other scholars who did not have access to the complete diaries and other sources of information at our disposal today.

Schumann's mental illness began in adolescence, before he had any sexual relations, and it recurred periodically in the form of what we would now call a bi-polar (manic-depressive) affective disorder. In 1831 he described a painful condition (Winnke) of the penis which Cherniak assumes was syphilis. However, syphilitic lesions are characteristically painless, and Schumann's Wund was medically treated with a solution of daffodil bulbs, not so anti-syphilitic remedy. Moreover, all of the many symptoms which he described over the years in his diary can occur with other diseases than syphilis: fatigue, malaise, sadness, anxiety, dizziness, headaches, oysteritis, ringing in the ears, haemorrhoids, and fainting spells. Even the fact that traces of mercury were found (by the untrained) in Schumann's hair does not prove that he was treated with mercury-containing compounds. Schumann habitually wore a hat, and hats were then blocked with mercury. Mercurials were also used for treating various diseases besides syphilis.

Schumann's autopsy report (1856) contains many vague and conflicting observations. It cannot be used for making a diagnosis of his mental disorder. However, the reported weight of his brain at death (1337.52 grams) is within normal limits for a forty-six-year-old man, which would contradict the assumption of a shrunken, atrophied brain. Indeed, letters written by Schumann from the hospital to his publishers and friends (including Brahms, whose latest composition Schumann carefully analysed) are impressively coherent and order-

ly, with neat penmanship, quite unlike those of a patient with advanced organic brain disease.

As for Judith Cherniak's opinion that Schumann's last works, for instance his Violin Concerto, are "gestures without substance, the last flickerings of a mind which is half destroyed": this is debatable. Yehudi Menuhin for example (in an unpublished letter) has described the Violin Concerto as "a treasure... romantic and fresh, and so logically interconnected in every impulse, thoroughly mentally healthy throughout". The time seems ripe for a new look at Schumann's genius, as well as his madness.

PETER OSTWALD
Department of Psychiatry, University of California, San Francisco, California 94143.

Alma Mahler

Sir, — Sophia Wyatt complains (Letters, June 15) that I appeared to have killed off Alma Mahler's daughter Anna in my review of Karen Monson's biography (May 11). I'm sorry for the misunderstanding, but what I meant by "Alma had three children who died young" was not "Alma's three children all died young" but "three of Alma's children died young". These were Maria Mahler, Alma's sister; Manon Gropius, and Martin Wolfel.

HERMIONE LEE
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'Contingent' Poetry

Sir, — When John Bayley (in his review of Anthony Thwaite's *Poems 1953-1983*, June 22) puts Thwaite and me in the company of Browning and Pound, as writers of "contingent" poetry, he pays us a high compliment, which is muffled only a little when he admits into the company also Wallace Stevens, whom few before Professor Bayley have thought of as having much in common with Browning. If Anthony Thwaite is lifted at being excluded from the first eleven of "essentialist" poets (Eliot, Auden, Larkin), he may care to take heart from Walter Savage Landor: "Regarding the occasional in poetry: is there less merit in taking and treating what is before us, than in seeking and wandering through an open field as we would for mushrooms?" Welcome to the club, Mr Thwaite! With Landor of the company, along with Pound and Browning, the conversation should sparkle; and the author of *The Stones of Empires* will hold his own there.

DONALD DAVIE
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Barrie and Stevenson

Sir, — Although a fact of no great importance, it is perhaps worth stating authoritatively once and for all that J. M. Barrie and Robert Louis Stevenson never met. My reason for making this statement is that two recent books, both of a scholarly nature, state that they did.

In her biography of Stevenson published in 1980, Jenni Calder quotes on page 14 an account by Barrie of a bilious meeting with Stevenson at Rutherford in Edinburgh in the 1870s; and in their excellent *Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* (1984), page 496, Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Prichard quote from the same passage.

Nevertheless this is quite definitely fiction. In 1922 the late Rosaline Masson compiled a volume called *I Can Remember Robert Louis Stevenson* containing recollections from all those still living who could do so. In the preface to the enlarged edition of 1925 she states that "Sir James Barrie was troubled to find himself, of the ninety-nine contributors to the book the only one who had never really met Stevenson face to face" (he had written "I never saw or spoke to him"). But, troubled by this, Barrie then wrote an account of an imaginary meeting, which Miss Masson included in her preface, "as it differs from the other contributions in being not fact but fiction".

Miss Masson also described this incident to me personally when I visited her in Edinburgh about 1935, and it is also described in Viola Meynell's *Letters of J. M. Barrie* (1942), page 250.

The fact of never having met face to face did

not, of course, prevent Barrie from becoming a close friend by correspondence — as did other contemporary writers who had never actually met RLS, such as Kipling, Rider Haggard, Stanley Weyman and S. R. Crockett.

ROGER LANCELYN GREEN
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'Wealth and Virtue'

Sir, — John Dunn (Letters, June 22) does not mend matters, I am sorry to say, with his suggestion that Adam Smith was simply expressing personal feelings when he wrote, in *Moral Sentiments*, ed 6, that "the very suspicion of a fatherless world, must be the most melancholy of all reflections". If Dunn will look at the first words of Smith's sentence ("To this universal benevolence") and its context, he will see that Smith is not expressing personal feelings but conducting a general argument to the effect that universal benevolence is buttressed by belief in divine providence.

Dunn's other quotation, from the *Wealth of Nations*, about "a debased system of moral philosophy" looks more promising, but attention to all the words (especially "towards and punishments... to be expected in a life to come") and to the context (the preceding paragraph) shows that Smith is not castigating all moral philosophy which is connected with religion but only a particular form of it, a form which divorced virtue from earthly happiness and tied it to heavenly reward, to be earned by "penance and mortification". Smith's own moral philosophy was ready to follow Bishop Butler in regarding moral rules as "the commands and laws of the Deity", and the moral faculties as "vicereagents of God", attended with the sanctions of conscience (shame and self-condemnation on the one hand, tranquility of mind and contentment on the other). He is even ready in this place (*Moral Sentiments*, III.5), to give a cautious recognition to the natural "hope" of divine justice "in a life to come". If one asks how these words, first published in 1759, can be reconciled with the attack in 1776 on "a debased system of moral philosophy", I think the answer is that Smith's attack is reserved for beliefs which confine divine reward and punishment to the after-life and confine virtue to asceticism. At any rate he concluded the *Moral Sentiments* chapter with the statement that "religion enforces the natural sense of duty" and left it in the edition of 1790 despite his revision of much else.

These remarks may suffice as a response to Dunn's request for evidence counting against his interpretation of Smith's position on religion. However, Dunn should not suppose, as his last paragraph suggests, that I would categorically affirm a contrary interpretation. I deliberately wrote in my review that "I would not like to say flatly" that Dunn was mistaken. I think there is clear evidence that Smith accepted Christian belief in 1759, that he had abandoned it by 1776, probably under the influence of Hume, and that, unlike Hume, he retained a measure of natural religion to the end of his life. But it is very difficult to determine how far his natural religion went, and I am inclined to think that he was not sure himself just where he stood. Dunn asks for evidence that Smith saw the existence of God as altering what "any human being" would otherwise have good reason to do. If that means at least one human being, the evidence I have given is more than adequate. But if it means each and every human being, I would not for a moment try to defend the proposition; for Smith declared that his friend Hume, who certainly lacked a belief in divine providence, nevertheless came as near to the perfection of virtue as "human frailty will permit".

D. D. RAPHAEL
Department of Humanities, Imperial College, London.

Wilfred Thesiger mentioned in his article "To the end of the Awash River" (TLS, June 22) that he had taken it from a book he is writing. It will be published by Collins, who have asked us to say that they expect to bring it out in the autumn of 1985.

The 1984 Bancroft Award, sponsored by the *Hudson Review*, has been bestowed on Achille Follen "in recognition of his distinguished achievement in the art of the novel".

Basil Blackwell

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COMMENTARY

Cause and impediment

Harold Hobson

WILLIAM DOUGLAS HOME
David and Jonathan
Redgrave Theatre, Farnham

William Douglas Home's play, *David and Jonathan*, though set in modern England, is a commentary on King David's famous elegiac cry to the dead Jonathan, Saul's son, "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women". Like Rattigan, Home is a sparkling wit; and paradoxically, like Rattigan again, his wit often hides (from the short-sighted) what of serious purpose he is saying. His merits obscure, to all but the attentive, his meaning. It is so in this play, which really ends with the contemporary Jonathan's grief-stricken confirmation of the words of the biblical David rather than in the brilliant joke that the audience delightedly takes to be its conclusion.

This characteristic of Home's has led to more critical injustice being done to him than to any other British dramatist of our time. The strength (the ferocity, even) of his convictions tends to be hidden from a superficial glance by the urbanity of his style; and his democracy is masked by his evident intimacy with the aristocracy. Thus it is the general critical opinion that Home is without social attack. This opinion, however, is not shared by the British Army. Social analysts who personally have never heard a bomb explode, nor a gun fired, nor felt the breath of physical danger have long been blandly and blindly impervious to the sensational political courage of a dramatist who at Le Havre preferred the humanity of the then German commander of the town to the military enthusiasm of the Allies (a sentiment not popular at the time, nor perhaps even now); and who paid for adherence to principle beyond the capacity of 99 per cent of men and women with a deliberately invited court-martial.

Of course, Home is one of the most amusing dramatists writing today; plays like *The Reluctant Debutante*, *The Manor of Northstead*, *The Reluctant Peer*, *The Secretary Bird*, *Lloyd George Knew My Father* and *The Jockey Club* Stokes have lightened the gloom of millions. But in one's appreciation of these it is wholly wrong to overlook the social significance of *Ambassador Extraordinary*, *The Bod Soldier Smith*, *The Dame of Sock and Now Barabbas*, which inaugurated the theatre of political investigation and criticism of authority several years before the English Stage Company had been thought of. The serious outlook (what-

ever the proliferation of jokes) of the man of Le Havre is fundamental to Home no less in the deviously betting bishop of *David and Jonathan* than in the murderer of the policeman in *Now Barabbas*.

The scene of the present play is a church. Douglas Home's strong sense of theatricality reveals in the ritual of the Church of England. In his *The Lord's Lieutenant* (which was seen at Farnham, but not alas in London), what fired his imagination was the kneeling at the altar rails in the Communion service; in *David and Jonathan* it is the reading of the banns of marriage. For when the elderly, fussy and well-meaning vicar (George Waring) comes to the bit about if anyone knows of a just impediment to the marriage, let him speak out, a voice from the back of the congregation cries "I do". The effect is electric; this situation has lain ready for the lifting in the Book of Common Prayer for more than 300 years, and I find it astonishing that, so far as I am aware, it has never before been taken advantage of. Paul Gambrell's clever design, which enables us to see both the vestry and the nave, makes the dismissal of the congregation, puzzled and shocked, very effective, which Home has seen to it the vicar is not. When he summons the interrupter, Jonathan (Sean Bean) to the vestry, and finds himself in the presence of a youth desperately in love with the bridegroom (John McAndrew), with whom in London he has gone through a ceremony of homosexual marriage without realizing that it was a fraud, he anxiously desires not so much to comfort or to change Jonathan as to avoid a scandal in his parish.

Perhaps that is reasonable enough; but it accomplishes nothing, for Jonathan is in the grip of a passion of which simple men like the vicar are completely ignorant. He calls in the aid of the Dean (Mike Shannon) without effect, and they both wonder, rather crossly, whether the Church has really anything to say in the modern world, so greatly changed since their college days. This is their mistake, and the source of their lack of understanding. For when their Bishop (Michael Cockerill) a splendid, powerful and worldly performance) intervenes it is clear that things are pretty much what they have always been. There have always been unconventionality and unfaithfulness and sorrow. This Bishop, who knows more about gambling than he does about God, clears up all the difficulties that defeat the others: all, that is, except Jonathan's. The agony of spirit in which this unfortunate youth is left at the end, no one caring for his betrayal, is the most moving moment in the play.

lithography. There are also over thirty of his original illustrations, from the designs for Ambrose Heath's Faber cookery books of the 1930s to the watercolours for Thomas Honnol's *Lady Pimby Fern*, or the *Voyage of the Window Box*, published in 1980 with illustrations recovered after nearly forty years from the bottom of a well where they had been put for safety during the Second World War.

A variety of other kinds of work can be seen: there are two samples of wallpaper, which, surprisingly, were commercial failures, and there is even a peep-show (c. 1930), made for Tom Laughton and loaned by the Rotunda Museum, Scarborough. More typical work is represented by several of Bowden's effective posters, notably for Shell, and by a number of large watercolours; this is the medium in which Bowden's art developed under the influence of Paul Nash, and was the one which he used so well as an Official War Artist in the Middle East, an important phase of his career which could only be represented here by his subsequent illustrations for the Puffin Picture Book *The Arabs* (1947). There are also six of his splendid line-cut illustrations of *Aesop's Fables* (1975), a subject which has given him full scope for his obvious delight in drawing animals in the most amiable and amusing form. It is no surprise that for one of his recent commissions – a device for the Provincial Booksellers' Fairs Association – he should have chosen to make a line-cut of his cat Toussy.

Amiable animals

David Alexander

Edward Bowden: Watercolours, Prints and Book-illustrations
Spelman's Bookshop, Micklegate, York.

York has in recent years become a flourishing centre for antiquarian and second-hand bookshops, and for the Festival this year Peter Miller of Spelman's has organized a delightful and wholly appropriate exhibition of the work of Edward Bowden. The shop window has been turned into a display case ablaze with Bowden's cheerful book-jackets. Few artists can have produced so much distinguished work for the book and advertising trades; Bowden has shared the view expressed in the career of Claud Lovat Fraser that there need be no distinction between the fine and the applied arts. He set out to be primarily a draftsman, and was the first RA elected as such. This exhibition shows how he evolved his distinctively bold and telling style at an early stage; he began to do commissions for the Curwen Press while still a student at the Royal College with Eric Ravillous and Percy Douglas Bliss, author of a sympathetic study of Bowden (1979).

Fortunately most of his work has been in less ephemeral forms than the book-jackets and the promotional material shown here. The exhibition contains many examples of his book illustrations, both in process block and in

Sales of books and MSS

Sarah Bradford

On June 24 in Monte Carlo Sotheby's sold the library of the late Florence Jay Gould, the celebrated and extremely rich hunter of literary, social and artistic lions. Holding court in her Cannes villa, El Patio (a name redolent rather of Reigate), Florence Gould collected people and objects; she was generous with her food, drink and money – in the form of literary prizes – and the recipients responded in kind with presentation copies of their works, suitably inscribed. "Roino dos lettres et dos Littérateurs", Henry de Montherlant wrote, while Françoise Sagan was more specifically grateful, inscribing a first edition of *Bonjour Tristesse* (1954). "Pour Madame Florence Jay Gould à qui je dois mon premier prix et ma première grande joie littéraire..." The copy was sold for 6,660 fr to John Fleming of New York.

Florence Gould's circle included Yourcenar, Robbe-Grillet, Gide and Cocteau as well as a number of minor and now unfashionable names, but the best and most expensive lots among the printed books were the thirteen-volume edition of *A la Recherche du temps perdu* by the Nouvelle Revue Française (1919–27) which, with two other works by Proust, *Jean Santeuil* and *Lettres à Madame Schekewitch*, were sold for 94,350 fr, and the second, definitive, edition of *Les Fleurs du mal* (1861) for 38,850 fr. This edition, prepared by Baudelaire over a period of four years, contained thirty-five new poems as well as revised versions of those which had appeared in the first edition. "Ce livre", Baudelaire wrote to Alfred de Vigny, "n'est pas un pur album, il a un commencement et une fin."

The Gould collection also contained some remarkable illustrated books, many of them presentation copies from authors such as Cocteau, Dali and Matisse, the authorial inscriptions courtly. "Hommage respectueux à Florence Gould", Matisse wrote on his portrait sketch of her on the first blank leaf of *Les Lettres portugaises*, illustrated with his original lithographs and including seven flattering autograph letters to his patroness signed "Henri Matisse, vif méditant". The price, however, was far from beggarly, 188,700 fr to John Fleming.

The cost of copying

Michele Field

In the near future we will have to accept that a photocopy is worth more than the paper it is printed on. Until now a scholar doing research, a teacher copying a text for a class, or someone in a commercial library reproducing articles from technical journals for in-house circulation, has felt entitled to use the photocopier in any way he wishes, so long as he does not sell his "publication".

But publishers are now supporting the Copyright Licensing Agency's decision to enforce the Copyright Act 1956. The CLA intends to do this by setting a price for a page and licensing the possessor of copying machines to print and pay. A trial scheme, making a nominal charge for photocopying in state schools, is already under way. In a few years' time this scheme should yield £12–£15 million, divided between those authors and publishers whose books and journals turn up in samplings of the copying done.

The Publishers' Association believes that photocopying deprives them of up to £25 million per year. They have evidence to suggest that about 200 million pages annually roll off school photocopiers, a fifth of the estimated 1,000 million pages of copyright material that is churned out in the country as a whole. By taking the average price of a book divided by the average number of pages, the CLA has worked out a scale of fees (that is, royalties over and above the 2p to 20p a page that readers now pay for the copying-paper and the service). For school use the rate is 2p a book or journal page (not a photocopy exposure but a page); for university use the rate is 4p for books and 8p for journals; for everybody else, the

rate who also paid 721,500 fr for Jules Renard's *Histoires naturelles*, illustrated by Toulouse-Lautrec. This copy, in a handsome binding by a follower of Marius Michel, G. Crette, contained not only twenty-two original lithographs by Lautrec but also two crayon sketches of animals and a coloured drawing of wild duck by the artist.

Rarity was the attraction of the major items in the sale of Christie's, London, on May 30, where a copy of the ninth printing of Shakespeare's first publication, *Venus and Adonis*, was up for sale. "Venus and Adonis", London [Humphrey Lowes] by William Leake, at the sign of the Holy Ghost in Paul's Churchyard, 1602 [possibly issued in 1608?]. The property of Viscount Parker from the library of the Earls of Maclesfield, it was a unique issue of an edition of which only two copies are known, the other, in the British Library, showing very slight bibliographical differences. It was acquired for £129,600 by Maggs. Rare too in its way was an almost complete set of the original proof sheets of Sir Thomas Phillips's printed catalogue of his own library with the author's autograph corrections. The pages, thick with Phillips's emendations, reveal not only his tireless scholarship and his efforts to keep up with the flow of new acquisitions, but also his miserly determination not to be cheated by the printers – "all the compositor practises these contrivances to swell out the lines, I shall have my catalogue printed elsewhere..." The set, unknown in Munby since it was discovered subsequent to the publication of his monograph on the subject, was the property of the Earl of Inchiquin and was sold for £9,180 to Jonathan Hill.

Rarest and most desirable of all was a beautiful gloased mid-twelfth-century manuscript of the Book of Genesis from Rievaulx Abbey, Yorkshire, in a contemporary white vellum binding. So many English medieval manuscripts have been rebound that to find a manuscript of the twelfth century in its original binding is a considerable event. Moreover, this manuscript also retained something which is very rare indeed, a contemporary "chemise" of rough tawed skin, still with traces of the animal's fur – it might be described as a medieval dust-jacket. It was sold to Headlam for £27,000.

respective rates are 4p and 10p.

Moreover, the CLA insists that only 5 per cent of a book, or one journal article, can be copied, and no more than 30 duplicates made. The 5 per cent applies even to books in copyright but out of print. A book can be difficult to obtain yet 95 per cent of it cannot be reproduced. In Britain, as in few other countries, publishers also retain a twenty-five-year copyright in the text as they print it, so even pages of Shakespeare or Plato could be included in the new charges.

The British scheme is a cumbersome one compared to the remuneration systems in countries like Denmark and Australia. There is not the legislation, which exists in other countries, to support the rights of both photocopy readers and copyright owners, nor a Copyright Tribunal to determine fair costs. Taxpayers will have to bear the new expense in schools of this currently cheap reading material, and their interests should be represented in the forthcoming battle between authors and publishers on the one hand, and librarians and educational authorities on the other, over the legal prerogatives.

The summer 1984 number of the *Author*, the organ of the Society of Authors, is also its centenary issue, and contains a rather flowing poem by Gavin Ewart ("Anyone who writes anything is an author"), a retrospective on the first hundred years by Victor Bonham-Carter and a symposium on the next hundred years and the prospects for professional authors in Britain. There are also contributions from Maureen Duffy, V. S. Pritchett, Peter Paul Read, Walter Allen, Michael Holroyd and others.

Getting it taped

Peter Kemp

PETER REDGROVE
The Scientists of the Strange
Radio 3

In one way, at least, Radio 3's production of Peter Redgrove's *The Scientists of the Strange* is a resounding triumph. Into the play's hour and a quarter, the special effects department have packed a virtuoso display of acoustics. Transmitting an impressive range of stereophonic sounds – from the whine of a dentist's drill to the hissing sliher of a guillotine blade, from eerie Gothic wainscoting to yells, shrieks, wails and gasps – the production would make an ideal demonstration-tape for showing off the full potential of any audio equipment. Differentiating sounds with fine precision, it has ear-opening sequences capturing the varying noises made by water as it laps, ebbs, drips, trickles down pipes or seeps into the ground. Echoes – reverberating around the play's profusion of differently shaped caves and vaults – are all endowed with their distinctive timbre, some ringing and some muffled. Sketches of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* keep sounding out. Humming and chanting recur. At a culminating moment, there's a kind of occult oratorio for five ghostly voices. On a lower level, a growling pop lyric about a "monster man" repeatedly breaks in.

Echoes of a different kind from those bouncing off the walls of the play's caverns can also be picked up. An extract from Poe is intoned. Lines from *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are spliced into the soundtrack – as are extracts from one of Rilke's *Duino Elegies* and Goethe's *Faust*. Amid all this noisy collage, the characters have some difficulty making themselves heard. When they do, they establish themselves, symptomatically, by the sound rather than the substance of their dialogue: it's only by pitch or accent that you can tell most of them apart.

This insubstantially la perbans in keeping with the play's insistence on the nebulous nature of the material world. But it also seems in accord with a pervading filminess. At the cen-

tre of the play, there's not much more than a wafer-thin notion – about the inability of the materialist to perceive the transcendental. Highsticker, a millionaire greedy for proof of human immortality, has honeycombed a reputedly haunted house with a battery of electronic surveillance aids, cameras and tape-recorders – then supplemented these with a team of ghost-hunters, psychic sensitives quivering receptive to paranormal vibrations.

The mansion itself, once the site of a "magical massacre", is abuzz with spectral signals. Unsurprisingly, given Redgrove's enthusiasm for the numinous, it turns out that these are picked up not by the videos and audios but by the clairvoyants and clairaudients. Tying with the technological, Redgrove makes considerable play with the idea of tapes being run at different speeds such as Fast Search or Slow. At one point, what initially sounded like screaming emerges, when slowed down, as a hymn of ecstasy. Likewise, a girl's apparition fits – viewed in slow motion on film – reveal themselves, it's alleged, as graceful, accelerated yoga routines. The play's repeated references to varying transmission speeds seem designed to demonstrate that, if tuned into properly, the cacophonous phenomena of life will clearly unveil their occult significance. Failing to appreciate this, Highsticker – for all his electronic clutter – can't get the supernatural taped.

Despite the production's sizzling stereophonic crispness, though, the tone in which this message is broadcast oscillates peculiarly. Redgrove's play is fey in both senses of the word. After episodes of the lyrically esoteric – paying rare attention to what are indicated as life's arcane symmetries: such as those between water ripples, wood grain and radio waves – it modulates into the coyly farcical: the initials of a chronicler of the mansion's murky past – CGS – are said to stand for *Cum Grano Solis*. Japishly suggesting that what's gone before should be taken with a grain of salt, the play never really succeeds as comedy, though. Just as its poetic interludes are distinctly short on "imaginative resonance" – despite all those realistically rendered echoes – so its sprightlier sequences are weird rather than witty.

The periodicals, 17: Interzone

Peter Nicholls

Interzone
8: Summer 1984
38pp; 124 Osborne Road, Brighton.
Subscriptions £5 (UK); £6 (elsewhere).

Interzone began life in the spring of 1982. It is owned and published by five science-fiction critics led by David Pringle and Colin Greenland, and not only looks like that old favourite of science-fiction radicals, the 1960s *New Worlds* magazine, but publishes several of the same writers.

In eight issues the magazine has not really acquired a personality, other than a sense of do-goodishness, and a resignation to reaching only the faintest of minority groups. This may well be the inevitable result of editorship by committee, and it may be that the magazine would improve if it had a single editor with strong and interesting opinions, as was Michael Moorcock with *New Worlds*. In fact, reading *Interzone* is a slightly depressing experience in every way but one: it is, paradoxically, a bad magazine with good stories.

From the beginning most of the stories in *Interzone* have been rather difficult to categorize: highly metaphorical fictions – fabulations – they recall Borges or William Burroughs rather than Asimov and Heinlein. Earlier issues relied heavily on well-known authors; they included works by Thomas M. Disch, J. G. Ballard, Keith Roberts, John Sladek, Angela Carter, John Crowley, and John Harriago, all of whom have in common that they are well known in the fields of fantasy and science-fiction, and that their work by popular standards is more experimental or difficult than usual – often very interestingly so.

But also, from the beginning, *Interzone* has sought out new writers, and here their achieve-

ment has been just as substantial, as can be seen in the contents of the last two issues (seven and eight). Number seven contains good stories by two writers who are almost unknown. Geoff Ryman's "The Unconquered Country" is set in an alternate, fantasized Cambodia (in which, though this is not central, houses and machines are literally alive), and its protagonist is a peasant woman. The story presents a clear-eyed, sensitive account of a life that is almost destroyed by incomprehensible political events, while it retains a kind of wary, tender autonomy. The story is also about surviving loss and despair, about living better than death, and not without its rewards even in the midst of nightmare.

In the same issue, "Tissue Ablation and Variant Rogonatorion: A Case Report", by the new American writer Michael Blumlein, is a savagely witty fantasy about major surgery performed without anaesthesia on Ronald Reagan, whose internal organs become the source of various useful medical items which will help to save lives in the Third World. It is written with the remote precision of a medical report, and recalls the prose of J. G. Ballard.

Interzone 8 also contains several good stories, quite different, though they all blend sharp observation with surreal juxtapositions. Some may most enjoy Andy Souttar's fey story "McGonagall's Lear", a tale of a bad Scots poet and his encounter with the Queen, and later with Elvis Presley and the Loch Ness Monster. Other will be drawn to Scott Bradford's "Unmistakably the Finest", which confronts a young woman's fantasies of love and the good life with the pseudo-realities of Southern California's dream landscape. The same issue contains the posthumous publication of a characteristically eccentric autobiographical meditation by Philip K. Dick. No other magazine in Britain is publishing science-fiction at all, let alone fiction of this quality.

COMMENTARY



"Scipio wounded at the Battle of Ticino", an engraving by Ghisla Bonnassou (1498–c 1580) after Polidoro da Caravaggio, included in Colnaghi's exhibition of Old Master prints, Mantegna to Meryon, at 14 Old Bond Street, London W1 until July 14.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 181

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than July 27. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 181" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on August 3.

1 Wherever there was the whitewashed wall of an officer's room or any other apartment in which English gentlemen are forced to kick their heels, there, likely enough, the head of Keats would be seen, scratched or drawn. . . . Anybody without the least amount of drawing could still draw a speaking, nay scolding, likeness of Keats.

2 I can't see him as a headmaster. I thought they had to be 100 years old and seven feet high, with eyes of flame and long white beards. To me a headmaster has always been a sort of blend of Epstein's Gneiss and something out of the book of Revelation.

3 Though a clergyman, very orthodox and of rigid morals, he indulged himself to an oath, which was "God-my-life". When you were out in your lesson, he turned upon you a round staring eye like a flash; and he had a trick of pinching you under the chin, and by the lobes of the ears, till he would make the blood come.

INFORMATION, PLEASE

William Henry Clayton (1823–77), architect: any information about his years in England (c1840–48); for research purposes.
Anne Crighton.
231 Armath Street, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Roger Roughton, poet and editor of *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* (1936–37): any information about him, or the whereabouts of his letters or manuscripts.
William P. Toth.
3612 Anglebrook Ct, Toledo, Ohio 43611, USA.

Robert and Philip Spence: authors/editors (?) of *Strawwhillier*, a satirical pamphlet published c1941 by Haycock Press, London; copyright owners sought, for a proposed German reissue.

Merlin Holland.
Halcyon Publishing Services, 115 Broomwood Road, London SW11 6JU.

Julio Stephen: any surviving letters to Leslie Stephen or to her first husband, Herbert Duckworth; for an edition of Leslie Stephen's letters to Julio Stephen.
John W. Bicknell.
Box 306, Eggemogin Road, Little Deer Isle, Maine 04908, USA.

Salvador Dali letters, photographs, personal reminiscences, etc; for a biography.
Meryle Secret.
Halcyon, PO Box 395, Walpole, New Hampshire 03608, USA.

Competition No 177

Winner: J. R. Maddicott

Answers:

1 Upon this ground, a man that is commanded as a Soldier to fight against the enemy, though his Sovereign have Right enough to punish his refusal with death, may nevertheless in many cases refuse, without Injustice; as when he substituteth a sufficient Soldier in his place: for in this case he deserteth not the service of the Common-wealth.

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*.

2 If the Wars of civilized people are less cruel and destructive than those of savages, the difference arises from the social condition both of States in themselves and in their relations to each other. Out of this social condition and its relations War arises, and by it War is subject to conditions, is controlled, and modified.

Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated by J. J. Graham.

3 On such a morning as this
With the Times for June the eleventh
Left with coffee and toast
You opened the breakfast-room window
And, sprawled on the southward terrace,
Said: "That means war in September."
John Betjeman, "In Memory of Basil, Marquis of Dufferin and Ava".

Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980): correspondence, recollections, photographs, especially relating to the artist's visits to Britain in 1925, 1926, and 1929, and his longer stay in this country from 1938 to 1953; for a centenary exhibition catalogue and other publications (including an edition of Kokoschka's letters and a new biography).
Richard Calvoressi.
Tate Gallery, London SW1.

Sir Edward J. Poynter (1836–1919): any information concerning works by or manuscript material relating to Poynter in public or private collections; for research purposes.
Alison Inglis.
William Goodenough House, Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1 2AN.

Samuel Rogers (1763–1855): documents; particularly old ledgers and other financial records relating to Rogers's bank (Rogers Towgood & Co), where he was senior partner from 1799 until his death.
George Slinson.
14 Ridgmont Gardens, London WC1.

John Thelwall: present whereabouts of six MSS vols of personal papers, purchased at Sotheby's in June 1904, by Charles Centre, who used them for his *John Thelwall* (London and New York, 1906).
P. J. Corfield.
Department of History, Bedford College, University of London, Regent's Park, London NW1 2NU.

John Thelwall

Vision and revision

K.J. Leyser

RICHARD HODGES and DAVID WHITEHOUSE
Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of
Europe: Archaeology and the Pirenne thesis
181pp. Duckworth. £19.50 (paperback, £7.95).
0 7156 1703 6

Few historical images have been portrayed as forcefully as that of the transition from the late-classical Roman world to the early Middle Ages and the Empire of Charlemagne which we owe to the vision of Henri Pirenne. The Mediterranean economy, society and culture of Rome, Italy, Gaul and Spain, let us recapitulate, were not destroyed or submerged by invading Visigoths, Ostrogoths and Franks, who all needed, used and adapted them to survive. They succumbed to the onrush of the Arabs, who forced the Carolingians to turn northwards rather than south, and to enclose themselves in a perimeter which had to endure a long siege, not least from Saracen attackers, once the grandsons of Charlemagne and their aristocracies were torn apart by ineluctable inheritance conflicts. Europe emerged from this siege only in the mid-tenth century and owed its new military, political and even economic good health to ruling families other than the Carolingians, most of all to the Ottonians and the royal house of Wessex.

Pirenne's vision stemmed from his profound reflections on the narrative and documentary sources he knew so well, and on what numismatists and archaeologists had already done to enlarge the literary evidence. Above all, it rested on his choice of economic criteria, the availability of certain goods and articles which the West imported across the Mediterranean from the East in the post-Roman centuries and then, he thought, failed to import in the age of the Caliphs of Damascus, Baghdad and Cordoba. The methodology of the master and his critics was one and the same, and there was nothing new in the contention that the findings of numismatists and archaeologists must be harnessed to confirm or challenge the impressions that could be gained from the all too patchy and fitful literary sources – the Latin histories and saints' Lives from the sixth to the ninth centuries. Now Richard Hodges and David Whitehouse, advocates of the "New Archaeology", founded on anthropological models, not only re-examine Pirenne's thesis but also claim that this is just a beginning, so plentiful and revealing might the archaeological evidence yet turn out to be. It is true that the authors warn us against the dangers of forming, indeed forcing, a new *vue d'ensemble* from the findings at a number of widely disparate sites, for instance Dorestad in the Lower Rhine and Siraf on the Persian Gulf, but they proceed to do so none the less.

With what results? The theoretical groundwork for this anthropologically orientated archaeology was first furnished by Dr Hodges in an earlier book, entitled *Dark Age Economics: The origins of towns and trade, AD 600-1000*. It is here summed up thus – "the fundamental difference between the New Archaeologists and their predecessors lies in their premise that archaeology is the past tense of anthropology". This however at once raises a question of method: whether anthropological economic models – according to which, eg, the Dark Age economy performed a different function and was based on gift-exchange rather than the open market to satisfy the needs of aristocracies – can be simply subsumed, or whether they should, like everything else, be postulated and then called in old on the strength of the literary evidence. To my mind wrestling with his sources must always come first for the historians of the early Middle Ages.

For the fifth and sixth centuries Hodges and Whitehouse marshal good evidence from a number of urban and rural sites: Rome, Carthage and Luni, but also south Etruria and the Roman Campagna. They come to the conclusion that long before the Arabs arrived these places and regions and their economies were in a miserable condition and by the sixth century bore no resemblance to what they had been like in the second. They measure the shrinkage of settlement and the decline in population, and find causes for it: plague, over-taxation after Justinian's reconquest, internal migration and a shift of habitations from the plains to the

hill-tops. A number of objections come to mind. The port of Luni is a rather special case since so much of its prosperity evidently depended on the trade in marble, which took a steep downward turn in the early fifth century. The authors also seem to accept the figures for the distribution of pork rations to the householders of Rome in 452 found in the Theodosian Code and so they arrive at c 400,000 as the number of its inhabitants. Yet are these figures to be trusted any more than those for the parade-state or indeed the very existence of military units cited in the *Notitia Dignitatum*?

It might also be suggested that a rural and urban economy can diminish in volume without radically changing in character. That this was so in the case of the Western Empire long after its political demise might be deduced from the continuing export of olive oil as the main source of energy from North Africa to the northern Mediterranean shores. The Vandal occupation made very little difference here nor did Justinian's reconquest, but the Arabs' advance of the mid-seventh century was decisive. It brought victory at last to the nomads and their camels, the permanent and age-old enemies of agrarian settlers and their complex systems of irrigation. East-West communications by land for a time replaced the sea-borne traffic of the past. The authors do not refer to Frensd's illuminating study of this topic, nor do they, oddly enough, discuss the work of Alfons Dopsch, who saw continuity and steady development rather than cataclysmic change in the wake of the German invasions.

The conclusion that the economy of the Western Mediterranean had been transformed completely before the Islamic conquests, so that the coming of the Arabs was a consequence and not a cause of this change, is startling enough. It leaves aside the religious and social driving-forces behind the expansion of Islam. If it stands and if we then ask whether the German assaults or the Arabs' westward drive caused the decline of so many flourishing centres, the answer, on their showing, must be: neither.

In the next section of their work the two authors set out to show that the Byzantine economy of the seventh and eighth centuries also suffered a contraction, although the discovery of a shipwreck at Yassi Ada off the south-west coast of Asia Minor, dated 625 and containing no less than 900 amphorae, points to the continuance of sea-borne trade. However, the presence of Syrian and Jewish merchants in seventh-century Gaul should not lead us to infer a massive long-distance commerce. These observations are valuable and must surely compel historians of the Latin West to

re-scale their impressions of the Byzantine Empire's fiscal and economic predominance during the centuries of the greatest Persian, Arab and Slav pressures and iconoclasm.

It is when Hodges and Whitehouse turn north again to discuss the economy of the Carolingian Empire that it is hardest to agree with them. The question they raise is whether the growth of trade between Dark Age kingdoms, especially in the North Sea, provided a sufficient financial base for Charlemagne's religious and cultural aspirations, for the intellectual, literary and artistic activities for which we use the short-hand term, the Carolingian Renaissance. "Archaeology...is beginning to reveal evidence which contradicts the view that the Renaissance was sponsored by a gradual accumulation of wealth", they write. Instead there are signs – archaeological – of a sudden and massive economic expansion. They find the evidence in the excavations of Dorestad and wish to link the trade of the Frisians here with massive inflow of silver from the Abbasid mines in the Khorasan, silver which had travelled via Russia and Scandinavia. This explains to them, among other things, the strengthening of the silver content of the Carolingian *denarii*. They would connect the rise of Baghdad as the centre of the Islamic world, its contacts with the Far East even and the discoveries at Siraf with this influx of silver into the Carolingian *Reich* through a formidable trade chain.

If the upsurge of commercial activity via Dorestad, Sweden and Russia was startling, its arrest and rapid decline, which the authors would date archaeologically from 820 onwards, was even more dramatic, and no less so the consequences: the troubles of Louis the Pious's reign and the savage stepping-up of Viking raids in the West brought about by sudden silver shortages. The economic determinism which underlies the new archaeology is beguiling but ultimately no less bleak than that dear to hardened Marxists.

Both Maurice Lombard and Sture Bollo promoted this backdoor theory of economic reactivation in the West, ie, it came not via the Mediterranean but via the Russian river valleys. In their enthusiasm for fine, not to say hairbreadth dating, our authors have a way of by-passing views which do not accord with theirs. Thus Philip Grierson, the greatest authority on early and high medieval money, on the whole rejected the claim that huge quantities of Arab silver dirhams flowed into the Carolingian *Reich*. He does not believe that even if they were all re-minted such an operation would have left no traces in the sources. Moreover, the contrast between a slow growth

of wealth based on agrarian surpluses or North Sea traffic and a sudden swell of Frisian trade with Scandinavia is a false and misleading one. Charlemagne and his following acquired most of their new wealth in a few decades, not by trade but by successful wars of conquest. Bounty, tribute and treasure were available in ever-increasing quantities during the 780s and 790s: annual payments from Benevento and above all the huge haul of Avar treasure looted from Pannonia in two great expeditions (791 and 796), specially organized for the purpose. This was quite enough to make possible the buildings, the luxurious manuscripts, the ivories like Alcuin to important benefices, in short the Renaissance, as Heinrich Fichtenau so wisely observed many years ago. Nor should the strength of the Carolingian home market and the excellence of Frankish native production be overlooked. Ermoldus Nigellus's descriptions of Louis the Pious's gifts to visitors, the Pope and the Danish convert prince, Hrold, deserve a mention here: linen garments, mantles made in the Frankish style, precious belts, white gloves and, not least, weapons, horses and wine.

Charlemagne and his successors raised sumptuous buildings – and the authors seem to underrate Aachen and Ingelheim – but that does not exhaust or explain their cultural policies. They meant to foster a learned ruling class, clerical and lay. Their gifts to churches were not tilted against the secular nobility, and ultimately the education of lay nobles was the key to the whole programme and to part at least it even succeeded. There were quite a few literate Carolingian aristocrats, not only members of the royal house, with libraries and ability to use the written word in government and communications. The tragedy for the Carolingians and their spiritual advisers lay in this: they believed that education would not only make men more effective in administration, it would also make them wiser and better, more obedient servants of God and of his kings. Often it did not but only gave edge to their ruthlessness and push.

Islam, according to Hodges and Whitehouse, did not play a critical role in the Mediterranean for the making of early medieval Europe, but elsewhere. To dissent from the authors over this, and over the meaning and resources of the Carolingian Renaissance, however, does not mean casting an adverse vote against either the new archaeology or anthropology in the study of the early Middle Ages; quite the opposite. The dialogue between disciplines and techniques for which they plead is indeed immensely valuable, evocative and urgent.

about the Vikings are by no means confined to their own time or to the age immediately after them. When possible financial gain or strong nationalistic instincts are involved, passions still rage high and historical truth goes overboard. Such was the case with those "enthusiastic and tiresome arguments" in the Normandy controversy about Rus and Slavs; and the contribution of Swedish Vikings to the "creation of the Russian State", which, as Logan sensibly observes, "overlooks in a grand way that a state is not created, that it does not come into existence in a single moment of time".

The originality of this book lies in its shift of emphasis rather than in startling new arguments, in a common-sense approach, and in the breadth of the picture which it offers. It ends with a brief survey of important questions about the Vikings that remain unanswered and should serve to dissuade us from answering them too hastily.

To *The Excavations of York: The Viking Dig* (158pp. Bodley Head. £12.50; paperback, £7.50. 0 370 30802 6) Richard Hall, the director of the dig, tells the story of the excavation of the Coppergate which took place between 1978 and 1981. He describes, with the help of colour and black and white photographs, not only the Viking Age discoveries but also other notable finds of a Roman civilian town and cemetery, an Anglo-Saxon helmet and the successive layers of medieval buildings and objects.

More causes than one

Helen Cooper

A.J. MINNIS
Medieval Theory of Authorship:
Scholastic literary attitudes in the later Middle Ages
323pp. Scholar Press. £35.
0899076412

Contemporary literary theory is a necessary part of a student's critical equipment, alongside the tools of close reading and psychological, structuralist or linguistic analysis; and the most productive readings often emerge from a theoretical eclecticism of the traditional and the modern.

The Middle Ages have presented something of a problem in all this. Medieval literature can, of course, be analysed by modern critical methods; but the contemporary literary theory that would serve to control and complement such approaches has seemed a little thin (except to those scholars who insist that all medieval literature is an expression of Christian orthodoxy, through allegory or irony if all else fails). A. J. Minnis has now set out to disprove the notion that scholasticism produced no theory of literature. He is not concerned with the *artes poeticae* and their instruction in rhetoric, nor with such familiar exegetical schemes as fourfold levels of interpretation. He looks instead to the commentaries on the *auctores*, the authoritative Latin writers, which he claims contain a poetic theory "at once historically valid and theoretically adequate". Scholars such as Judson Boyce Allen have recently called attention to the significance of these works, and Dr Minnis provides the fullest analysis of them to date.

The bulk of his book is devoted to expounding what these theories were, and how they changed and developed between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. The commentators' concern for the literal sense of biblical texts increased, encouraging the development of

finer tools for dealing with language, rhetoric and style; the individuality of the *auctor* was given greater stress; and pagan *auctores* began to be accorded the same kind of critical treatment as sacred poetry had received – a process that eventually produced the incipient humanism of Petrarch and Boccaccio.

What, then, does this medieval theory consist of? It might be illustrated by applying to Minnis's own book the commentators' terms found in their "Aristotelian prologues". These expounded the four "causes" of every literary work, laying particular stress on the author's intentions. In *Medieval Theory of Authorship* the efficient cause is the author himself, Alastair Minnis; or perhaps, as a *duplex causa efficiens*, one might in addition allow the late Beryl Smalley, of most honoured memory, as the moving efficient cause, in the role occupied by God in the writing of Scripture. The material cause, the matter out of which the book is made, is medieval literary theory, specifically the prologues to commentaries on authoritative works. The formal cause describes the shape the work takes, and has two aspects. First there is the *forma tractandi*, or the form of treatment, which consists here of non-fictional prose discussion of defining examples. Second is the *forma tractatus*, the form of the treatise, in this case an introduction, five chapters and an epilogue, subdivided in such a way as to provide a series of *distinctiones* that define literary theory by analysis. There are also two samples of that invaluable scholastic invention, the alphabetical index, one doubling as a dictionary of terms. The final cause is also divided into two. The immediate final cause is the instruction of the reader in the subject in hand; and the remote final cause is the better understanding of medieval literature – or even, perhaps, as with the commentaries, "the perfection of the rational soul by virtue".

This is not stuff for the general reader, and even the academic browser would be ill-advised to open the book at page 77. But Minnis's exposition of this material is meticulous and lucid. He demonstrates beyond all argument that such analytical frameworks existed, and were widely known and used as a normal method of approaching a text – and not just authoritative Latin texts. Such authorial commentaries as Dante's letter to Cino Grande on the *Divine Comedy* and Gower's prologues to the *Vox Clamantis* and *Confessio Amantis* take these approaches for granted. They constitute a healthy reminder that the most obvious features of a text are the right places to begin studying. Causal description insists that deliberate authorial decisions as to content, structure and purpose are paramount; though it must also be admitted that the commentators' own analyses of these things can look like answers to a tick-the-appropriate-boxes questionnaire.

The problem whether such methods of analysis are theoretically adequate in themselves, as Minnis claims on his first page, emerges most clearly in the discussion of Chaucer, who chooses to present himself as the compiler, the *compilator*, of the *Canterbury Tales*. This is, as Dr Minnis points out in his final sentence before the epilogue, a "shield and defence", not a fact; but one thing that medieval theories do not allow for is an author who lies – who consistently sets up a false set of intentions. They are concerned with surface, not depth. It is hard to see how such theory can provide modern readers with critical tools of the fineness and subtlety that writers such as Chaucer or Dante deserve. It is good to be given a clear and authoritative statement of the conceptual framework within which they wrote, and it constitutes a useful recall to essentials; but the greater the poet, the more he will burst out of the frame. The poems of Dante and Chaucer are giants to the commentators' dwarfs, and the clothing offered by the commentators is not capacious enough. If modern critics can begin to offer a better fit, it is because we have the giants to measure it by.

Where the real rabbits are

Denton Fox

J.A. BURROW
Essays on Medieval Literature
218pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £17.50.
0194111878

This striking collection of essays on Middle English literature is likely to give new hope to those scholars who have come to plod through the specialist journals with increasing weariness, since it indicates how much light can still be shed on even the most familiar Middle English works. The essays are in some ways very diverse: the four that have not appeared in print before are, for instance, a discussion of the use of the title "Sir" in *Sir Thopas*, "Honour and Shame in Sir Gawayn and the Green Knight", "Chaucer's *Knights' Tale* and the Three Ages of Man", and a discussion of the integrity of the literal level in allegories. Other essays range from a study of a Middle English proverb to a piece on the *Merchant's Tale* that represents, as J.A. Burrow says in his preface, "a kind of 'new criticism' of Chaucer which has become common since the time of its publication (1957)". But in a more fundamental way, the collection has a surprising coherence.

In part, this coherence comes from Burrow's careful and intelligent attention to the "context", in various senses of the word, of the Middle English works. In the first essay, "Poems without Contexts", where he deals with those most anonymous of poems, the ones preserved in the scraps of parchment bound in MS Rawlinson D 913 ("Maiden in the moor", "Charm of Ireland", etc); he faces the question directly, and argues that all poems have, in some sense, a context. Here, by taking this group of poems as itself providing a context for each of the poems in it; and by adding two early allusions to "Maiden in the moor", he throws more light on these baffling and controversial poems than might have seemed possible.

In his essay on Langland's second vision, Burrow provides a very different context, the customary pattern of sermon, contrition, con-

fession, penance (= pilgrimage); and pardon. By showing how Langland makes drastic changes to this basic pattern, he provides the best extant explanation of the notorious pardon-tearing scene – though one can also see why Langland omitted this scene from the C text. In the notes on *Sir Thopas*, the contexts are mostly linguistic. Burrow investigates the connotations and registers of several terms, and is thus able to demonstrate with certainty some pleasing new nuances and meanings in the tale. Even in the "new criticism" of the excellent essay on the *Merchant's Tale* very helpful use is made of its Chaucerian context, and the comparison of this tale with the *Pardoner's Tale* is more enlightening than one would expect.

But for all this emphasis on contexts and facts, the thrust of the book is consistently towards literary criticism, towards an explanation of the work in question. The scholarship in the book is abundant, and of a high order, but it is always there to support a literary purpose, not for its own sake. One of Burrow's characteristic methods is to take some solid feature of a work, or of that work's context, and then to show how that feature can be made to illuminate the work. The feature can be very large: that the concept of prudence is central in Langland's *Preaching of the Swallow* seems obvious, at least after it has been pointed out, but no one before had ever seen the implications of this. Or it can be very small: the entire explanation of *The Cloud of Unknowing* is convincingly founded on the author's passing distinction between "a bodily consolate of a goodly thing" and "a goodly consolate of a bodily thing". It can be simply a proverb: Burrow uses the common saying, "Young saint, old devil", to trace different views about the proper development of man. The startling point can even be a modern formulation, as when Burrow uses the social anthropologists' distinction between "shame cultures and guilt cultures – not in itself, perhaps, a very solid distinction – in dealing with the ending of *Sir Gawayn and the Green Knight*. This piece, a sort of postscript to Burrow's earlier book on *Gawayn*, again provides, I think, the most satisfactory solution

yet found to this notorious puzzle.

The method of moving from the initial solid feature to the conclusion is different in each essay; one can only point vaguely at the author's sagacity, learning, and hard work. But his style and tone are reasonably consistent. The style is completely lucid, informal – sometimes (under the influence of *Essays in Criticism*) very informal – and concise. (Occasionally, indeed, one wishes for expansion: the essay on allegory is clearly going to be an important one, but a few more pages at its end might have removed Angus Fletcher from his precarious perch between heaven and hell.) The tone is reasonable, matter-of-fact and totally without self-importance; Burrow is notably generous to other scholars. One is left with the impression of a scholar who is trying to reason his way through a problem, not of someone trying to prove a point. As a result, Burrow's arguments are very hard to dissent from; where demurrals or hesitations are necessary, he introduces them himself. While some scholars (to produce an example of the sort of ungenerous remarks that Burrow avoids) seem like magicians who distract their audiences with scholarly or theoretical pyrotechnics so that they can pull unnatural and perhaps phantasmagoric rabbits out of hats, Burrow is like someone who points out a real rabbit on a real hill: once you know where to look, the rabbit is obvious. This method has, for an ambitious author, its dangers: a reader's first feeling of "Why didn't I think of that myself?" may quickly change to the more comfortable feeling, "That's so obvious that it's not worth saying". But the risk is worth taking.

The medieval English allagorical poem, *The Court of Sapience*, was one of the earliest productions of Caxton's printing press. The 339-atan anonymous poem, about the nature of wisdom, was popular in the fifteenth century, but only one modern edition has been published (in 1927) and since then a new manuscript has surfaced. E. Ruth Harvey has taken advantage of this discovery to produce another text of the poem (226pp. University of Toronto Press. £29.75. 0 8020 5628 8).

Puzzle corner

Paula Neuss

DOUGLAS GRAY and E. G. STANLEY (Editors)
Middle English Studies
Presented to Norman Davis in honour of his
seventieth birthday
288pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £35.
0 19811835

Many of the essays included here are presented more as puzzles to be enjoyed than as works with conclusions, appropriately to the nature of medieval literature. "Perhaps the splendid solver of philological problems to whom this volume is dedicated will solve this one too", observes Talbot Donaldson. Analysing a passage from *The Knight's Tale*, Donaldson shows that Arcite was not pitched on to his head by falling from his horse, as is usually assumed, but rather thrust against his saddle-bow like a modern driver pinned to a steering-wheel. The "head" must belong to the horse, but what actually happened to it?

Other essays discuss philological and textual matters in an open-ended way. In considering Chaucer's spelling, M. L. Samuels provides further evidence for the view that the *Egerton* of the *Plowman* is "an authentic and autograph work of Chaucer", while George Kane suggests that the "revisions" in the G version of the *Prologue to The Legend of Good Women* are not necessarily Chaucer's own – Mustanoja's essay is a reworking of his chapter on *gyn* in *Middle English Syntax*: he now feels that a poet's choice of the *gan*-periphrasis may be dictated by reasons other than metre or rhyme.

John Burrow examines sixteenth-century criticism of *Sir Thopas*. Tudor and Elizabethan views appear to have been as divergent as those of modern critics. Spenser apparently considering the seemingly-nosed knight to be a "moral" figure of chastity, while Skelton, seeing the nose as grotesque like a hawk's beak, moves towards a burlesque interpretation which Shakespeare picks up in *Twelfth Night*. A more sober *exemplum* is reconsidered in Pamela Gradon's "Trajanus Redivivus". It is not simply that even a pagan can have merit in God's sight: there is a social as well as a theological argument for Trajan's salvation. Trajan is a model for the rulers of Langland's day, and illustrates *Dowel* in practice.

In "Clocks, Dials and other Terms", George Rigg points out that while in Modern English we often express distance by time (Toronto is "seven hours from London"), in Middle English time is often expressed by distance. The mechanical clock was invented in the late thirteenth century and needed a name. A "clock" was something one heard rather than saw, and despite the French *cloche*, it almost never meant "bell"; *belle* on the other hand, to its sense of "church-bell", regularly competed as a time-keeper. A *dial* was something one looked at, and the slang meaning "human face" was in existence as early as 1500.

What will undoubtedly be the most interesting puzzle to the general reader (judging by the popularity of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*) is presented in Peter Heyworth's "Jocelin of Brakelond, Abbot Samson, and the Case of William the Sacrist". Jocelin narrates how the Benedictine monastery of St Edmundsbury was roused from its moral and literal bankruptcy by Abbot Samson, who was elected in opposition to the Socratic William Wierdel. It was essential and just that the corrupt William be dismissed, but given his popularity and influential friends, how did Samson manage it so quickly? Heyworth suggests that the answer can be found in Jocelin's reference to *quedam succeda*, "things of which it is best to say nothing". This, he says, refers to "unspeakable" acts in the male and celibate society of a Benedictine convent.

At the heart of the book is an essay by Edward Wilson on a poem presented in 1431 to William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester. The poem, of which the hitherto unpublished text is given at the end of the essay, was composed and performed in the Bishop's honour and accompanied the presentation of a gift. It is ideal for inclusion in the present offering: And as ye have bygone sparythe not to procede, For only perseverance deserthe the coronayoun.

The democratic road test

Bernard Wasserstein

NEIL STAMMERS
Civil Liberties in Britain in the Second World War
250pp. Croom Helm. £14.95.
0709923712
MIRIAM KOCHAN
Britain's Internees in the Second World War
182pp. Macmillan. £17.50.
0333 28995 t

On May 18, 1940, as German troops smashed through the Low Countries and northern France, Neville Chamberlain told the British War Cabinet that it was "imperative" for Britain to abandon its "present rather easy-going methods" and to resolve on a form of government "which would approach the totalitarian". The remark came rather incongruously from a man who had been ousted as Prime Minister barely a week earlier on grounds of alleged lassitude and insufficiency of vigour. Yet on this occasion, as on so many others previously, Chamberlain expressed the national mood in the dramatic early days of Churchill's premiership.

Did Britain indeed "approach the totalitarian" form of government during the Second World War? According to Neil Stammers, "Britain was not a democracy during the second world war", its political system "was, in many respects, a closed one" which "came to resemble a one-party state", and its government "exhibited important political features normally associated with authoritarian regimes".

Mr Stammers bases these rather far-reaching conclusions on a narrow analysis of one aspect of the system, the question of civil liberties. He justifies his broad findings by reference to a simplistic conceptual framework which begins by distinguishing between "democratic" (by which he appears to mean liberal) and "radical theory". Of the former he complains that while "it is said that the Soviet Union is undemocratic because civil liberties do not exist there in any real sense", "democratic theorists have rarely attempted to assess the relationship between theory and practice in their own societies". It is this (supposed) omission which Stammers wishes to repair. In explaining the focus of his study he argues that systems of government, like motor-cars, are best tested under conditions of extreme stress: the relationship between theory and practice of civil liberties in Britain is therefore most usefully examined under the conditions of crisis government during the Second World War. This, he suggests, will help unmask "the omissions and inconsistencies of democratic theory", a task which "radical theory" has shirked in recent years in favour of "increasingly incestuous... intensely theoretical internal debate".

This approach, which promises at any rate a systematic (if, as the motoring simile suggests, a somewhat mechanistic) analysis, unhappily degenerates into a tendentious and unconvincing exercise in historical chop-logic. Stammers signally fails to define what he means by the term "civil liberties", referring vaguely to those "civil liberties which had been incorporated into the ideology of democracy at that time". Nor is the rigour of his argument enhanced by his omission of what on almost any definition must surely be the central feature of such a discussion: military conscription and conscientious objection. The lame excuse is ventured that previous work had been published on that subject (this, citing a work which appeared long before the official papers for the war period became available). Alas, the same might be said of almost every area treated in this book, including the internment of aliens, detentions under regulation 18B, wartime broadcasting, restraints on political activity, and the war economy: on none of these does Stammers provide any significant new information and in his discussion of these topics he frequently twists his evidence into most unfortunate knots.

A typical example is his account of the internment of enemy aliens during the war. Stammers lays justifiable stress on the conditions of chaos, disorganization and occasional maltreatment, in which more than 20,000 Germans and Italians (mostly refugees from

totalitarianism) were interned, and several thousand deported to the Dominions. But his discussion of the rapid turn-around at government policy in late 1940 is lamentably biased. Under public and parliamentary pressure most of the refugee internees were released within a few months. Stammers pays tribute to the opponents of internment but argues that the reversal of policy "can be more realistically assessed as palliatives designed to appease opposition, but to have a relatively minor effect". He points out that, after all, although most internees were released, "once the principle of general internment had been adopted it was never really abandoned". The emphasis here on the restrictive principle rather than the liberal practice comes strangely from an author who announces his intention to pierce the obfuscating fog of liberal ideology in order to



Mussolini in a typically bombastic, borchested, oratorical stance, reproduced from Propaganda: the art of persuasion: World War II by Anthony Rhodes (318pp. Angus and Robertson, £20, 0 207 937193).

The khaki muse

Keith Bosley

VICTOR SELWYN, DANA VIN, ERIK DE MAUNY, IAN FLETCHER
From Oasis into Italy: War poems and diaries from Africa and Italy 1940-1946
267pp. Shephard-Walwyn. £9.50 (paperback, £5.50).
085683 063 t

What do Enoch Powell, Spike Milligan and Richard Hoggart have in common? They all served in the Mediterranean during the Second World War, and because they have all written of their experiences they are unlikely to be forgotten in *From Oasis into Italy*, an anthology of war poems, diaries and pictures. The book is a labour of love funded by the Salamander Oasis Trust, a charity dedicated to the location of creative work from that front and its preservation in the Imperial War Museum. It is a sequel to the Trust's first anthology, *Return to Oasis* (1980); the original *Oasis* was a slim volume of poems by soldiers of Montgomery's Eighth Army, published in Cairo in 1942.

From Oasis into Italy comes with forewords by its advisers, Field Marshal Lord Carver and General Sir John Hackett, an editorial introduction, illustrations, portraits, biographies, and a useful background article with maps; the body of the book is divided according to theatre of war—the Middle East, North Africa, Italy, Yugoslavia and Greece (which here includes Cyprus). One of the aims of the Trust is "to put the literary record straight; challenging the myth that only World War One produced the poets". But is there really still such a myth? One would hope that by now we have stopped looking for a second Wilfred Owen. Most of the poets of 1914 were Romantic idealists (and volunteers) shattered by the experience of the first total war: their theme was the loss of innocence and the rejection of militarism. The poets of 1939, on the other hand, were conscripts whose idealism had been tempered by their fathers' tales of horror, and they fought a more obvious foe. Popular taste, however, still clamours for a poetry full of the bluish Hippocrene, which it finds—though it has turned sour—in the earlier poets, but not in the best of the later. There are not too many of these in the present anthology: this is doubtless due in part to the limitations of period and setting, but other aspects of editorial policy

clarify the supposedly harsh reality.

The discrepancy recurs elsewhere in the book, most notably in the statistical ledger-dominant by which Stammers emphasizes the element of compulsion in war-time labour policies.

Particular solicitude is shown for the travails of the Communist Party of Great Britain in this period. The banning of the *Daily Worker* is accorded extensive examination, with much unsatisfactory straining after a conspiracy theory of the matter. Stammers expresses indignation over the government's failure to respond immediately to the CPGB's sudden shift in policy on June 22, 1941, following the invasion of the Soviet Union. He complains solemnly (and repeatedly) about the short-lived ban on BBC broadcasts of the Internationale.

The conclusion of this book returns to the broader argument sketched at the outset. Britain, it is suggested, failed the democratic road test of the Second World War. Stammers has hardly described as democratic. The argument attains its reductionist destination with the observation that "the existence of democratic forms during periods of peace and stability serves to mask an important aspect of the system—the extent to which it will attempt to protect itself from the people it is supposed to serve when it is under threat".

It is not necessary to be a defender of the wartime coalition government's often illiberal policies on these issues to feel that Mr Stammers has stretched the point more than a little. A useful corrective to one aspect of his warped picture is Miriam Kochan's unpretentious but fascinating account of the internment of enemy aliens. Mrs Kochan has interviewed many of the former internees and she weaves their individual stories into a vivid narrative. It is perhaps a pity that she did not interview any of the pro-Nazi internees (all those interviewed appear to have been refugees from Nazism), nor any of the internment camp guards, nor any of the civilian population on the Isle of Man, many of whom were hostile to the sudden incursion of thousands of enemy aliens into their midst. But she succeeds in avoiding the tone of scandal-mongering which mars many previous accounts. Her bitter-sweet story of the ambivalent feelings of the refugee internees (many of whom regarded the affair as an enforced but on the whole welcome holiday) rings true. They, at any rate, knew the true difference between "mask" and reality, between Douglas IOM and Dachau.

must also be taken into account.

Four editors and two advisers—all old soldiers—for a book of this size is rather top-heavy. If the book reads and looks here and there like a school magazine it is because the poetry comes over more strongly than the poetry. But the crucial error is adumbrated by the poem on the half-title page:

Listen! These poems were not made in rooms,
But out in the empty sand,
Where only the homeless Arab roams
In a sterile land;
They were not at tables written...

(The author, John Jarman, is described as "one of the truly great but neglected poets of the war"—a doubly sad description, since he seemed to model himself on Owen.) In the first paragraph of their introduction the editors state: "As with the earlier volume, an essential condition for inclusion has been that the pieces should have been written or drawn at the time". Some fine reporting by Erik de Mauny and others bears this out as far as prose is concerned; there is even a painful "Letter to Next of Kin". But poetry is a more elusive commodity: if the editors had been compiling an anthology of the First World War, they would presumably have disqualified David Jones's *In Parenthesis*, completed some twenty years after the event and yet perhaps the greatest war poem in English. But there is more to it than an insistence on actuality, as the introduction goes on: "the editors rejected poetry and prose which they suspected was written from a distance and no doubt by a professional at home". So would he contributors must not only have consorted with the muse on the spot, they must also have been amateurs. (Some of them, however, went on to become professionals; there are good early poems here by Ian Fletcher, Robert Garloch, Michael Hamburger and Henry Reed.)

Sir John Hackett warns the reader in soldierly fashion that some of the verse is "plain doggerel", but much of it is preferable to the more earnest posturings, proving that art is no respecter of intention. There are some salty ballads no one would own up to and there is the wry homesickness of Kevin McHale:

The plains of bloody Lombardy
We've led to understand
Are famous for their poplar trees
So tall and straight and grand
That's dinkum for the lilies

The tree for me, old chum,
A dirty great big sticky
Aussie eucalyptus gum.

The best poems in the book are by Lord Bevan and Hamish Henderson. In July, Lord Carver points out, "one was fighting where people were living", and Italy has become a permanent part of Bevan's life: perhaps best known for his translations of Quasimodo. The future author of *My Sal Pharaohs* (not mentioned in the bibliography) has a longish poem whose title, "Ubique", is the motto of the Royal Artillery. "The long barrel of the gun is pointing towards me," begins; "I peer down its spiral rifling at the places where the poet has fought. The poet has a verbal energy and a professional's feel for metaphor not too rare in this book."

The soul saves what it needs
From the waste, hurls it at its will.
Those gun positions, those faces, those planes
arc ringing out the still.

Henderson's work has similar qualities, and one takes one's hat off to both men for producing such work under conditions that would have brutalized some of us.

The British Library catalogue data classifies this book under English Poetry; but the book can be no more than a source of material for more "professional" endeavours. The editors may well be satisfied with this humble notation: they have made readily available much of what might otherwise require a visit to the Imperial War Museum. But one cannot help wondering about the material they rejected. Before this century is out there ought to be an Oxford—or some such—Book of War Verse, which would bring together not only Owen and Douglas, Rossetti and Pound, but also the poems of war whatever the colour of the poet's baby son terrified by the sight of his plumed helmet, Bertrand de Born the Troubadour's song in praise of bloodshed (which is why Dante put him to hell, swinging his sword over his head like a lantern), Grylls's poem about his little niece killed in the Thirty Years War, Ungaretti's poem about a dead comrade in a trench beside a dead comrade, and of course David Jones. The present anthology at least includes a couple of Italian Partisan songs, which is a step in the right direction.

Growing into manhood

Nicholas Rankin

AUTRAN DOURADO
Pattern for a Tapestry
Translated from the Portuguese by John M. Parker
170pp. Peter Owen. £8.95.
07206 0608 X

This re-creation of adolescence in 1930s back-country Brazil is both authentic and cunningly wrought; it also deals, in an interesting way, with a perennial obsession of South American writers: the nature of manhood.

On publication in 1970, the book puzzled some in Brazil who thought it not a proper novel; there wasn't a "story", nor consistent "characters", and who was this huge mulatto outlaw called Xambá, barely mentioned before, taking over all five sections of the last chapter?

The novel is about growing up as a male, and into the mystiques of manhood. "João was discovering, without being aware of it, that things and people were linked together in a never-ending round-dance." To achieve this effect, John M. Parker suggests in a useful introduction, Autran Dourado does not offer a "horizontal and linear" narrative. He mimics more closely the way memory works, processing in carefully detailed prose what de Quincey called "this tumult of images, illustrative and allusive". Dr Alcibiades, a key informant of the last chapter, says "I'll never get to the point I'm aiming at. Old people are like that, we keep getting side-tracked." Unreliable narration or not, all the points join up in "the constellation of pain" Dourado skillfully depicts.

The author calls his chapters or narrative units "blocks", and suggests they can be read in different orders, like Julio Cortázar's *Rosyela*. Each chapter is a stage in the blossoming inner life of the fatherless adolescent João de Fonseca Nogueira, and they cover the principal stages of passage of human (male) experience.

Sex, being primal, makes "The Bridge House" of the initial chapter a brothel. But by the sixth, also sexual, "Leaping Bull" chapter, the sensual images absorbed in the first have become fused with incestuous memories of João's naked mother, and overlaid with a thwarted passion for an aunt, whose frustrations end in the fetters of the Church. Death, with Latin inevitability, comes next. When João is at boarding-school, his uncle Maximiano begins his death throes next door. João feels a grief he does not feel, and gets an afternoon off school. Love runs third. The boy is smitten with "Valiant Valentina", an acrobat from the travelling-circus; he lies to his pals about what they did together.

Family relationships and conflicts make up chapters four and five. "The Prodigal Son" is Uncle Zózimo who behaves strangely; nobody will talk about his funny-shaped ear. Finding that it is the result of a suicidal wound and apprehending the horrors of schizophrenia, João gains the knowledge that admits him to the adult key-holders of the family skeleton-cupboard. In the chapter called "A Family Affair" he finds out how to grandfather Zé Mariano, who left his bossy wife to live with his illegitimate son, and who died alone, feral and fed.

Dourado writes of human universals in a precise locale. "A cold night, outside the wind rustled in the old mango trees in the garden, in the avocado tree. In the flat-topped cashew-tree." He contrives a particular adolescent sensibility strikingly well: swoons of passion, fears and ignorance, dissembling, doubt and wonder.

The last chapter throws the whole book into relief. When, "after many years away, now a grown man, João returned to Duas Pontes" he conceals his two self, and is only interested in an old-time desperado, scarcely mentioned to date, a gunman on horseback from the southern border, of Minas Gerais with São Paulo. "The name that he bore—Xambá, with its strange vibrations that appealed to the imagination, conjuring up African, Arabian and Oriental tales"—designated as a daring and heroic figure that the boy had once looked up to. "He was a tall half-bred Negro, a huge mountain of a man... he must have quite a drop of Indian blood, people said. For João and the other lads, to have Indian blood

was in itself a suggestion of glory, a sign of strength, a certificate of courage and bravery, arrogance and savagery."

Xambá is the unregenerate *macho animus*, old Adam, the dark Other. As João has now grown into a writer, he teases from different sources the story of Xambá's manhood. There is silent courage under the doctor's knife, painfully extracting a bullet; there is humiliation by a prostitute who rides and lashes him with a silver whip; then capture by the corrupt police. Mighty Xambá shows "disgraceful" cowardice before a Corporal's whip and confesses all. That night, he is shot "trying to escape".

This seventh chapter, "Man As He Is Clothed", demythologizes the Brazilian male ideal. Under the reified hero of male sexual aggression is just another man, whose weakness lies in his sexuality. Lead and cold steel he can take, but not the whip, because he had enjoyed it earlier at the hands of a woman he loved. Xambá's shadow casts doubts back over the book. The mythic hero whom João and the other boys admired and emulated embodied all the fantasies of freedom; the true history they all had to live, growing into "manhood", was dominated by repression and constraint.

John M. Parker's translation renders the prose fluently. There are clumsinesses. A Colt revolver that "never chewed up a fuse" is an odd gun, and "Go get pushed in my arse" sounds queer in English. Nevertheless, Unesco have included the translation in their *Collection of Representative Works* (Brazilian series). And despite its uninspired English title, *O risco do bordado* is a sensitive and truthful evocation of growing up male, by a writer worth noting.

In *Narrative Irony in the Contemporary Spanish-American Novel* (210pp. Cornell University Press, \$25, 0 8014 1574 8), Jonathan Tittler discusses the use of irony in the work of Carlos Fuentes, Juan Rufo, Manuel Puig, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Mario Vargas Llosa, Julio Cortázar and Isaac Galdames. Separate chapters are devoted to analyses of individual novels by these authors. The book also contains a general chapter, "Toward a Spanish-American Writing".

Robin Buss

PASCAL QUIGNARD
Les Tablettes de buis d'Aproponia Avila
147pp. Paris: Gallimard. 70fr.
2 07 070095 X
PIERRE GUYOTAT
Le Livre
210pp. Paris: Gallimard. 90fr.
2 07 0700704
Vivre
221pp. Paris: Denoël. 82fr.
2 207 229777
CLAUDE MAURAC
Zabé
229pp. Paris: Gallimard. 68fr.
2 07 070089 5

Pascal Quignard's witty and refreshing *Les Tablettes de buis d'Aproponia Avila* is a historical novel with no history. The seventy-one years of Aproponia Avila's life extend across the boundary between the fourth and fifth centuries, that is to say the decadence of Roman civilization and the rise of Christianity: a preface, the outline of the historical novel that might have been, puts the life in the context of these events. After twenty-five pages we arrive at Aproponia herself, to discover what she has felt worth recording of all this on the box-wood tablets to which she confides her innermost thoughts. Of course, there is nothing. Things to do, things to remember, things that smell good or bad, anecdotes, meetings, the rebellion of a lost romance, the trivia of an individual experience that extends across time, like the song of the nightingale, because it has no awareness of history.

Quignard's first novel, *Carrus*, which won the Prix des Critiques in 1980, used repetition in a similar way to create a hypnotic effect of the passage of time experienced by an unmoving observer. So firmly are Aproponia's eyes fixed

Period flavours

David Coward

FRANÇOISE SAGAN
The Still Storm
Translated by Christine Donoghue
188pp. W. H. Allen. £8.95.
0 491 03262 5
HENRI TROYAT
The Web
Translated by Anthea Bell
189pp. Oxford: Aidan Ellis. £8.95.
85628 131 X

The Still Storm is a brooding novel of raging passion. Of course, it does not brood and rage all the time. In between, there are waltzes, crushed silk and horses. There is also a test: you must believe that people can be "slaves to their senses" and you must answer the narrator's call for a reader "who is prepared to be entertained, is ready to believe my story and be moved by it". Feverish blood would also help.

It is 1852. The scene is Angoulême (France). Enter Florn de Margelasse who has a peach-like complexion, long almond-shaped eyes and shoulders that can blush. Quilled and ledgered lawyer Nicholas Lomunt is in turn jolted and

lajoyed by Florn. That is his destiny. Hers is to love Gildas Caussinade, a peasant with an aristocratic air and good teeth. Animal and virile, Gildas is a poet and tragedian who is hit with the likes of M. de Vigny. His destiny is to love mysterious *soubrette* Martha who proceeds to run through the whole of the ruling class and is possibly (or possibly not) the embodiment of Revolution. The focus is on "the dual loneliness" of Florn and Nicolas, though Angoulême is "both the background and the principal actor in the drama". Observe, however, that Florn and Gildas are "the two really vital characters at the heart of this tale". Or at least they are until the appearance of mon-eating Martha who has sensually like honeypots have flies. Zola's Nana brought down bourgeois society in 500 pages. Martha manages the thing in a paragraph and a bit.

The Still Storm has the Sagan hallmarks of glamour, beautiful people, quadrilateral triangles and sex with biting. Yet not all is

tinsel, for there are the makings of a thoughtful *roman d'analyse* in Nicolas's musings about memory, story-making and disillusion. But makings are not enough. Readers who like red neutre rarely content with pink blanchage.

Meat-eaters will fare better with Henri Troyat's dark and marvellously sustained 1938 Prix Goncourt winner (not 1983 as the jacket proclaims). *The Web* is very much of its time with its chocolate-painted interiors and that grim obsession with adolescence and the family, which, from Mauriac to Bazin, was the stuff of a certain kind of French fiction. But if it has a strong period flavour, it is no period piece, for Troyat's touch is mastery.

Gérard is a "monstre". A sickly pseudo-intellectual and chronic attention-seeker, he is sound on Nietzsche but not very good at life. He shuns human reality and exacts total subservience from his mother and sisters whom he bullies unmercifully. One by one they get away and he is left with his own resources which prove to be very small. The moral is spelled out quite clearly: life cannot be brought to heel, it must be accepted.

As morals go, this is trite enough and if *The Web* were a moralizing novel we might well feel short-changed. But its peculiar and impressive strength lies in Troyat's ability to get inside Gérard and to take us with him. The narration slides imperceptibly into discreet inner monologues which expose the nerve ends and wormy loathings that twist just beneath the surface of Gérard's view of himself. His world is full of smells—of food, breath, bodies—and is described in highly visual images which undress him and unweave his conviction that others are a mere bowel-movement away from animality. Gérard is weak, spiteful and vindictive. But it is because we are struck, from the inside, by the full force of his disgust that we understand that he is incurably beyond moralizing.

The Web is a claustrophobic tale of self-destruction. It is written with an intensity which is matched only by the quality of the writing, which is well rendered by Anthea Bell, Troyat's accredited translator. It is not perhaps a great hook—its range is too narrow—but it is splendidly crafted and horribly fascinating.

Filling in the gaps

on the eternal truths (the rain on the temple of Jupiter, a pumice stone, children's games, arrivals or departures), that they do not register mere historical accidents.

Pierre Guyotat also establishes a musical structure and subverts the historical novel, primarily by writing his epic in reverse chronological order. *Le Livre* is not easy to read because of its idiosyncratic spelling, and still more difficult to stop reading because its author has abandoned at the same time all conventions of punctuation and paragraphing. Those brave enough to embark on what is, in effect, a 210-page sentence, deserve some reward. It is likely to come first in the form of relief at realizing that the text can be understood, then with the gradual perception of Guyotat's plan. Whether this is reward enough will depend on how firmly you believe that the text and its reader are engaged in a joint enterprise, demanding considerable exertion from your side.

"Mon but était de remonter le temps à travers des corps", Guyotat writes, and his essay in *Vivre* ("... ton ciel à la sueur de ton sexe") is a considerable help in disentangling, at least, the intentions of *Le Livre*. The other pieces in this companion volume form a good introduction to Guyotat's work: they start with an autobiographical fragment on masturbation, written in 1972, which is an initiation for the unwary to one of his author's obsessions, though the effect is most likely to be to discourage others from the practice.

After Quignard and Guyotat, it comes almost as a shock to realize that Claude Mauriac, in *Zabé*, is using some of the resources of the conventional novel to evoke a historical period. His narrator may be insane, but he tells it straight and, though he views the 1920s and 1930s mainly from the Parisian brothels where he is searching for the image of Sandrine, the sister who is his one true passion, his narrative precisely conveys the style and manner of the time.

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How to dish the dirt

T. J. Binyon

DOROTHY GARDINER and KATHRINE SORLEY
WALKER (Editors)
Raymond Chandler Speaking
271pp. Allison and Busby. Paperback, £2.95.
0850315395

FRANK MACSHANE (Editor)
Selected Letters of Raymond Chandler
501pp. Macmillan. Paperback, £6.95.
0333346254

RAYMOND CHANDLER
The Chandler Collection
Volume 1: The Big Sleep, The Lady in the Lake, The Little Sister
571pp. Picador. £2.95.
0330281526

Volume 2: The High Window, The Long Goodbye, Playback
636pp. Picador. £3.95.
0330281550

Volume 3: Pearls are a Nuisance, Smart-Aleck Kill, Killer in the Rain
783pp. Picador. £4.95.
0330282166

Ryndon Chandler was born in Chicago in 1898 and spent his early childhood in Nebraska. In 1895 his mother, abandoned by her husband, brought him to London and moved into a house in Upper Norwood occupied by her mother and maiden sister. In autumn 1900 he was sent to Dulwich College as a day-boy, entering the school the term after P. G. Wodehouse had left.

On leaving school he toyed with the Civil Service, then dabbled for a time in the shallows of literary London as a reviewer and poet, before going back to America in 1912 and settling in California. In 1932 he was fired from the South Basin Oil Company for drunkenness, took to writing tough short stories – the first, "Blackmailers Don't Shoot", appeared in *Black Mask* in 1933 – and in 1939 published *The Big Sleep*, *Farewell, My Lovely* followed in 1940, *The High Window* in 1943 and *The Lady in the Lake* in 1944. During this time he was also working as a screenwriter, collaborating on *Double Indemnity*, and writing the script for the Alan Ladd and Veronica Lake film, *The Blue Dahlia*. In 1949 *The Little Sister* appeared, *The Long Goodbye* in 1953. In 1954 his wife Cissy, whom he had married in 1924 a week after his mother's death, and who was eighteen years older than him, died and a little later Chandler attempted to commit suicide by shooting himself – but missing – in the shower stall of the house at La Jolla. Over the next few years he spent a good deal of time in England, was troubled, on and off, by alcoholism, brought out his last book, *Playback*, in 1958, and died in La Jolla in 1959.

Chandler was obviously not the most well-balanced of personalities, and the material in Frank MacShane's collection of letters and in Raymond Chandler Speaking (which arranges excerpts from letters, articles and unpublished work under thematic headings) provides suggestive pickings for the amateur analyst. Chandler plays a variety of roles here. Late in life, looking back on his career in the oil business, he writes: "There was a lawyer in our office... [who] said often that I was the best office manager in Los Angeles, and probably one of the best in the world". The same talent for business manifests itself in his dealings with the film industry. "My next job... is to do a job for Universal on one of the most unusual deals ever made in Hollywood... or so I am told." He fearlessly calls the movie moguls down: "If I said things to them that a writer in Hollywood simply does not say to the big bosses... And in the end I almost think they liked me for it." No wonder, after the way he saved their bacon over *The Blue Dahlia*. "The last picture I did there nearly killed me", he writes to Hamish Hamilton. "Here was I a mere writer and a tired one at that actually going on the set to direct scenes – I know nothing about directing – in order that the whole project might be saved from going down the drain. Well, it was saved. As pictures go it is pretty lively." The fearless honesty and plain-speaking that gain him respect in Hollywood serve him well in the sanatorium he visits after his suicide attempt. "I didn't find that it took any special amount of daring to tell them

all what I was going to do and to do it. And in the end strangely enough they almost seemed to like it. The head nurse kissed me and said I was the politest, the most considerate and cooperative and the most resilient patient they had ever had there, and God help any doctor who tried to make me do anything I wasn't convinced I ought to do." A year later he reports the result of a stay in the Las Encinas sanatorium in Pasadena: "Finally the head guy said: 'You think you are depressed, but you are quite wrong. You are a fully integrated personality and I wouldn't dream of trying to interfere with it by psycho-analysis or anything of that sort.'... I thought he was damned clever to take me to pieces so smoothly. I hadn't expected anything so penetrating."

Alongside this pleasing, if not unpathetic strain of fantasy runs a much less pleasant obsessive fastidiousness. Of James Cain he writes: "Everything he touches smells like a billygoat. He is every kind of writer I detest, a faux naïf, a Proust in greasy overalls, a dirty little boy with a piece of chalk and a bond fence and nobody looking. Such people are the offal of literature, not because they write about dirty things, but because they do it in a dirty way. Nothing clean and cold and ventilated. A broil with a smell of cheap scent in the front parlour and a bucket of slops at the back door."

He complains to his agent about the difficulty of getting domestic help in La Jolla: "Everybody has colored people and they are no damn good to us. My wife simply will not put up with their dirt." When writing to thank Hamish Hamilton after a visit to London in 1956, he comments that America lacks England's "faint

air of squalor... I have been into minny lavatories where a single dirty towel was thrown on the floor; grimy little kitchens such as I had in Carlton Hill, bath tubs that needed scrubbing and had needed it for quite a while, people dripping with amusing or intellectual small talk who don't wash their hands when they go to the bathroom."

Most fascinating of all, perhaps, are his remarks about women. He has "a strange sort of instinct" for understanding them; when he was a young man he could have "picked up any pretty girl on the street and slept with her that night", indeed, he adds, "the most strict and puritanical woman I had ever met had been in bed with me a week after I met her." Strangely again, there is "never any bitterness or boredom" in these affairs; he loves them all still and they love him. At the same time he finds it "impossible to respect a woman who lives with a man" outside marriage; he is himself, on the testimony of his sister-in-law "the most wonderful husband a woman ever had".

Though Chandler may put women on a pedestal in his letters, when the subconscious is let off its leash in imaginative creation it naturally portrays them as evil and powerful creatures. In *The Big Sleep* Carmen Sternwood murders Rusty Regan and tries to murder Marlowe. Mrs Grayle, aka, Velma Valento – "a blonde to make a bishop kick a hole in a stained-glass window" – brains Lindsay Marriott and shoots Moose Malloy in *Farewell, My Lovely*. Mildred Haviland drowns Crystal Kingsley and shoots Chris Lavery in *Lady in the Lake*. Mrs Murdock pushes her husband

out of a window in *The High Window*, and in *The Long Goodbye* Eileen Wade beats Sylvia Lennox's head to a bloody pulp and later shoots her own husband.

Picador's three-volume paperback contains practically all Chandler's fiction with the exception of some eight short stories and, apparently for reasons of copyright – *Farewell, My Lovely*. The latter omission is a pity, for it is hard not to agree with Chandler when he writes: "I think *Farewell, My Lovely* is the best and I shall never again achieve quite the same combination of ingredients." He never did.

Having the work all together does show very clearly the degree to which Chandler canonized his *Black Mask* and *Dime Detective Magazine* stories when writing the novels. It wasn't a simple process: the short story "Big City Blues", for instance, contributes to *Farewell, My Lovely*, *The High Window*, *The Lady in the Lake* and *The Little Sister*. Chandler himself seems to have been slightly uneasy about the morality of this practice. It's true that the novels are immeasurably superior to the stories from which they come, and that the constant process of reworking and republishing shows Chandler as the artist he wished to be, the man "who had taken a cheap, shoddy and utterly lost kind of writing, and... made it something that intellectuals claw each other about." At the same time it does reveal the minor scale of his talent, his fatal lack of creative dynamism: he wrote, in essence, all that had to write in the five years from 1934 to 1958, thereafter he spent his time recycling the material for the carriage trade.

Scientific and sardonic

John Lucas

REDMOND O'HANLON
Joseph Conrad and Charles Darwin: The influence of scientific thought on Conrad's fiction
189pp. Edinburgh: Salamander. £17.50.
0907540422

"The secret casket of his genius contains a vapour rather than a jewel." Forster's famous remark about Conrad has often enough been approvingly quoted and perhaps helps to explain why so much of the writing about him is vapid in the extreme. Certainly, of all the great modernists he has been the worst served by his critics. Recently, however, matters have begun to mend. There have been important studies by Jacques Berthoud and Ian Watt, Zdzislaw Najder's monumental biography has helped us to define the cultural, political and intellectual context of Conrad's work; and now comes Redmond O'Hanlon's valuable and beautifully produced book. On more than one occasion Dr O'Hanlon refers to Forster's re-

mark, but he does so in order to suggest that Forster was "uncomprehendingly" responding to mysteries in Conrad's work that he was in no position to unravel. Forster had not read what Conrad had read, had little sense of the packed array of ideas from which the novels typically start and to which they continually return; and so did not know what Conrad was offering.

Very often it was a vapour. Conrad makes use of the language of evolutionary biology in order to hint at the miasmic nature of human origins and their likely ends. For the process of human history may well be degenerative. Max Nordau admired Conrad's work, and if the Conrad who emerges from O'Hanlon's reading seems at first glance the tragic pessimist familiar enough from earlier commentators, the difference is that in this new book we are made to see that such pessimism did not stem from anything so conveniently simplistic as a Polish soul or a particular deformed temperament; it was arrived at through Conrad's deeply pondered consideration of his reading in the biological sciences – especially of Darwin and Lamarck.

Attacking a deserted fortress

Lachlan Mackinnon

P.J.M. SCOTT
E. M. Forster:
Our permanent contemporary
215pp. Vision. £14.95.
0854782559

CHRISTOPHER GILLIE
A Preface to Forster
196pp. Longman. Paperback £4.25.
0582353149

P.J.M. Scott offers a notably passionate defence of what he finds valuable in Forster's art, and is equally unhesitating in dismissing the homoerotic short stories as worthless. He attacks Forster's explicit credo as shockingly inadequate, suggesting that liberals of Forster's generation believed their world to be permanent and felt therefore licensed to attack what was, it transpired, a deserted fortress. He is appalled by the man, and concurs in the picture P.N. Furbank gives, but argues from his own meetings with him that Forster at the end achieved the serenity of Yeats's "Lapis Lazuli". For Dr Scott, Forster is "the last great Romantic poet", and he writes excellently about the use of landscape throughout the fiction. He lays a new emphasis on *Arctic Summer* and the commonplace book as revelations of a thwarted greatness.

Perceptively, Scott wonders whether Forster transgressed against the artist's need for isolation and repression, and paid for it. The novels and the commonplace book escape from "the fundamental accident which seems to lie just behind or beneath the lectures on the Novel and other parts of Forster's arts-criticism". Forster's godlessness risks belittling all human activity, as is plainest in *A Passage to India*. Forster has a "woodpeckerish partiality" about Christianity at odds with his desire for a god who would descend to explain himself and love us; a Christlike figure: the author might have gone on to the broader question how far all agnosticism, or atheism, are shaped by the religions they reject, whether they can exist in a purely or only a parasitic form. He might particularly have done so because he goes on about so much else.

We learn from this book that Scott has kept bachelors, lived in both hot countries and feudal societies, that he believes that the Chinese are too corrupt to run a business (the British too lazy to staff one), that genocide is the central feature of African politics, that we live in a "nation where pornography and child-rap have become a way of life", that AIDS is the central "proleptic signal" of man's just fate, that contemporary art ought to be comic (shunning the "very profitable udder" of "easy negation"), that most of "Mr. Samuel Beckett's literary endeavour" feeds, and that he puts his faith in Boethius's God. "I like it, I like it," he crowns at the end of one of his own anecdotes, and there is more, much more, not all of it easily likeable. The author's unusual sense of

relevance has a Pooterishness mirrored by his perplexing style. Where Leavis was doggedly determined not to write well, Scott seems resolute for flamboyant archness and dissonance. Jane Austen and Forster give us, for example, the same "jocose delight".

Forster's claim to be a moral exemplar has been brutally rebuffed by the story Furbank tells. This book tries to salvage something, and though some of the claims are absurd (*Honours End* "feels half-way as spacious as *War and Peace*") there are acute observations here and a powerful case for taking Forster's views on nature seriously. The author takes the Leavisite position that novels are good for us, and it is perhaps to show how this is so that he has allowed his own character to protrude. It is a pity that so interesting a critic should be so bad a writer. The reader must laugh and pshaw his way through to what is of value, and many will be deterred by Scott's tone of illiberal superiority.

Christopher Gillie's *A Preface to Forster* is a useful and straightforward guide for beginners.

Exhortations from the City of Invention

Joanna Motion

FAY WELDON
Letters to Alice:
On first reading Jane Austen
127pp. Rainbird/Michael Joseph. £8.95.
0718124383

"Imagine Jane Austen talking at the Assembly Hall, Alton, on 'Why I wrote Emma'", Fay Weldon suggests to her fictional niece. Indeed. And imagine the audience response. Is Miss Bates modelled on a real person, Miss Austen? Do your domestic obligations distract you from writing? Is it reasonable to conclude that you think more highly of your gentlemen characters than your ladies?

Equivalent questions have been asked at Fay Weldon at assembly halls and seminar rooms all round the country and up and down the world. Consistently she has answered them, paying her dues to the literary industry and what she presents as the greater burden, the weightier responsibility of the modern writer.

You have to be answerable, although you would rather stay home knitting... It won't do you have to come down to Canberra: you want to come down to Canberra. Somehow, it is registered as duty. You're lucky, moreover, if they pay your fare. In *Letters to Alice on first reading Jane Austen*, Weldon makes herself answerable not just to the passing audiences who come to hear her talk, but in the reader of the printed page. She awards herself an imaginary niece, "little punkhead Alice", squirming with discomfort at having to do Jane Austen on an Eng Lit course. What is the point, of Box Hill and Netherfield during the proximity of Charles and Elizabeth, and the Big Mac hamburger?

O'Hanlon quotes a letter to Cunningham Grahame in which Conrad remarks that "What makes mankind tragic is not that they are the victim of nature, it is that they are conscious of it... We can't return to nature, since we can't change our place in it. Our refuge is in simplicity, in drunkenness of all kinds, in lies, in beliefs, in murder, in thieving, in reforming – in negation, in contempt – such man according to the promptings of his particular devil. There is no morality, no knowledge and no hope, there is only the consciousness of ourselves..."

This has about it the unmistakable ring of *fin de siècle* nihilism, and reading that letter I am reminded of a passage in Arthur Symonds's *London: A Book of Aspects*, in which, walking through a Saturday night crowd, Symonds wonders "why these people exist, why they take the trouble to go on existing". Choosing drunkenness or reforming: it all comes to the same thing, a way to "drag out our time until the time is over, and the sooner it is over the better".

But what then of the "merchant-navy ethic", of keeping the ship (any ship, whether of line or of state) safe from the destructive element? This does not receive much attention in O'Hanlon's book, probably because the novel

He is informative and admirably succinct about the family and the life, though his discussion of liberalism is marred by a failure to follow up the distinction between Trilling's and Forster's kinds of liberalism that is adumbrated. There is an interesting account of Edward Carpenter, and the book is excellently illustrated. There are also a gazetteer of Forster's residences, biographical notes on people close to him (though calling *Orlando* a "biography" is a little slapdash), a chronology, an annotated bibliography and the text of Whitman's *Passage to India*.

The centre of the book dissects the novels efficiently. To give only a page and live lines to *A Room with a View* is peremptory, but the other early novels are accurately and more carefully treated. The reading of *A Passage to India* is long and incisive, if not wholly surprising. This book can safely be recommended as a start, though by its nature it cannot pose or answer the question why, more perhaps than P.J.M. Scott recognizes, a pervasive boredom seeps from the last novel to gnaw at the whole career as we see it in retrospect.

Fay Weldon's exhortatory letters are designed to convince Alice of the worth of what she is overlooking. They draw not only on the affection and understanding of one novelist for another (and Fay Weldon is responsible, after all, for a highly praised television adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*), but also on the writer's own perception of the value and function of fiction.

Her central metaphor for literary creation is the City of Invention: Castle Shakespeare dominant in the middle; some well-built but neglected houses (Arnold Bennett, Sinclair Lewis) standing about; the all-male suburb of Sci-Fi at one edge; next door the red light district of Porn; the Prefab village of film and TV tie-ins at the perimeter. The image turns twice when taken to its limits, but it enables Fay Weldon, who is wary of any academic and institutional approach, to emphasize to Alice the direct and idiosyncratic response every reader can have to any structure in the city. She pictures the Jane Austen locale as pleasant and grassy and points out some of the attractive features – in particular of *Emma* and *Northanger Abbey*. She champions the vigorous, epistolary *Lady Susan*; *Sense and Sensibility*, by contrast, she registers as unadventurous and yet.

Aunt Fay claims that writers' lives and personalities are unimportant in appreciating their work, but that their times matter. In fact, as a Jane Austen promoter (and she reminds Alice of her own stint as an advertising copywriter), she draws on all these. She provides copious and colourful information to place in context the attitudes to splinterhood, work, duty and death of Regency England. Her favoured method is to line up the novels and their author against a historical backdrop, and then to light

he chooses to focus on is *Lord Jim*, and that novel is more concerned with the question of heroism than with the stoical virtues of survival and containment. What O'Hanlon shows is that in many ways *Lord Jim* is a pure novel of ideas. It puts to the test Darwinian notions about the evolution of human consciousness and it engages with the possibility of degenerative tendencies which can threaten such consciousness. There is no space here to expand on O'Hanlon's thesis, but it must be said that in his brilliant handling of Darwinian ideas and in showing how they took hold of Conrad he is entirely persuasive.

There are, however, two matters with which I take issue. O'Hanlon quotes Conrad's letter to Wells in which he declares that "the difference between us, Wells, is fundamental. You don't care for humanity but think they are to be improved. I love humanity but know they are not!" O'Hanlon seems to give this his seal of approval. But does it ring true? Would it survive a reading of *The Secret Agent* or *Nostromo* or *Under Western Eyes*? Yes, Conrad believes that humanity cannot be improved. But love? It comes oddly from a writer so bent on the uncovering of all idealism, so persistently sardonic in his reading of political activity.

This leads to another point. For while O'Hanlon seems to me to make an unanswerable case for Conrad's indebtedness to Darwin, he doesn't perhaps take seriously enough the need to question some of the formulations of social Darwinism that Conrad also came to rely on. Conrad was haunted by the possibilities of an irreversible degenerative process. And O'Hanlon claims:

When humane institutions had not yet hygienically cleared Europe of village idiots, the sight of monstrous births, or untreated deformities, when all the minor disfiguring diseases of the West were still rife, and in the new industrial cities, becoming apparently more virulent – then there was simply nothing but vague chimeras like decent feeling and common sense to set against Nordau's own hybrid nightmares.

Nothing else? I grant that Nordau was widely taken to be a serious writer, but that doesn't mean that those who opposed him had only vague chimeras of their own to offer. A socialist reading of history is hardly that. If Conrad shared many of Nordau's assumptions, may that not tell us something about a habit of mind that chose to absorb and transmit views which could not have been put critically to the test without dispelling some vapour?

Alice's understanding with the passion of her personal, and even sisterly, involvement.

The letters are urgent with a mission to explain. Weldon fights for fiction, scattering among these letters the beliefs that it makes sense of life, creates a circulation of shared experience, provides an enlightening escape from reality and even gives practical lessons on how to be a better human being. If the Minister of Education and the Prime Minister read more novels, your exams would not be so difficult to pass, university places having been cut. They would know what it felt like to be an unsuccessful student, and they would have mercy.

She writes with conviction and wit and only occasionally descends into the obvious and the patronizing. When she falls, however ("Did you ever see the original *Moby-Dick* on the Bounty with Charles Laughton? You'll have got a good picture of a midshipman's life from that"), it is enough to make any self-respecting eighteen-year-old, with or without green hair, want to shred the correspondence.

To her credit she acknowledges that she is off her familiar territory. Her novels can stand up for themselves, representing as they do a "properly formulated vision of the world". Outside fiction, she is less sure that she is safe. This series of letters constitutes a compromise: within a fictional border, Fay Weldon has produced a patchwork where her writerly beliefs, the morality and wisdom she speaks of in the book's dedication, are buttressed by reminiscence, focal colour and excerpts from other writers. So it is perhaps not surprising that *Letters to Alice* should be less revealing as an approach to Jane Austen, or as a message to modern youth, than as an insight into the mind of its author. And the place to find the best of Fay Weldon is not here, but in the novels.

John Lucas

Sustaining the nation

George Gómori

LÓRÁNT CZIGÁNY
The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature: From the earliest times to the present
 582pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £25.
 0 19 815781 9
TIBOR KLANICZAY (Editor)
A History of Hungarian Literature
 572pp. Budapest: Corvina. £15.
 9 6313 15428

Most nations in Europe can look back on a long literary tradition; there are European languages in which poems were being written a thousand years ago. Hungarian is a small language (it is spoken by approximately 15 million people in and outside Hungary), but Hungarian literature can also boast of a long and varied history, which began at the end of the twelfth century with the text known as "Funeral Sermon" (*Halotti beszéd*). This has remained extant in the vernacular, but the greater part of Hungarian literature in the Middle Ages was written in Latin, the literature of the spoken language coming into its own only later, in the sixteenth century.

Two things define Hungarian literature: the general "European" context within which it has developed, and the peculiarly "Eastern European" tasks which it began to undertake from the end of the eighteenth century. Most major European cultural developments have their counterpart in Hungarian literature; and it had its own variant of nearly every major artistic movement or stylistic trend. On the other hand, as Lóránt Czigány points out in his introduction to *The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature*, in Hungary "literature... has always been primarily a vehicle for national survival and social improvement". Although the seeds of such a concept were probably planted by the Protestant preacher-writers of the sixteenth century, it became a consciously upheld principle only after 1784, when suddenly the national identity of Hungarians came under threat.

At any rate, the concept of literature as "a national institution", a forum for demands for social reform or national independence is not a uniquely Hungarian phenomenon — Poles, Ukrainians and Serbs, to name only a few, had similar ideas. None the less, it has by now become a tradition, if not the main tradition of Hungarian literature, that a writer, a poet, is not worth his salt if he does not share with his community its most pressing social and political problems. While Czigány has clearly recognized this and opted to write a "traditional" history of Hungarian literature, he has also tried to take an unbiased view of twentieth-century writing in Hungary and to give full

credit to authors who were less preoccupied with national issues.

Unavoidably, every comprehensive history of a national literature is biased in favour of the present and the recent past. *The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature* is no exception; but while it is true that Hungarian literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries warrants special attention and generous treatment, it is still debatable whether it should be given as much as 384 out of 484 pages of text. Literature before 1800, and especially its cultural background, is described too sketchily by Czigány. For example, of the Humanist chroniclers of the fifteenth century, he mentions János Thuróczi and the Italian Bonfini (whose *Renim Ungaricorum Decades Quatuor* was first published in its entirety only in 1568), but fails to mention, let alone discuss, János Zsámboki-Sambucus, the publisher of the complete Bonfini, or such important sixteenth-century chroniclers as Brodarics, Oláh, Ferenc Forgách and Miklós Istvánffy. Again, while his treatment of the Reformation and its consequences in Hungary is adequate, Czigány could have included more information on the role which Protestant scholars and writers played in the shaping of cultural consciousness from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. A case in point is the Calvinist College of Debrecen. It is mentioned fleetingly on page 53 and reappears on page 95 in connection with the poet Csokonai, as "an educational establishment of controversial intellectual profile". This may be true for Debrecen in the late eighteenth-century, but it ignores at least two hundred years of development which made a powerful contribution not only to the study of Protestant theology but also to the establishment of higher standards of scholarship; it was at Debrecen that Pál Medgyesi, György Martonfalvi, and the author of the first English grammar in Hungary (1664), György Csipkés Komáromi (Comarinus), taught, to name only a few outstanding professors of the seventeenth century.

A similar establishment was the Protestant College at Sárospatak, whose fame was surely due to more than the few years that Comenius spent there. Incidentally, the preacher-writer Péter Bornemisza never studied there, as Czigány claims, but probably at Kassa (now Košice in Czechoslovakia). Bornemisza's pupil, Bálint Balassi, is the outstanding Hungarian poet of the century and, accordingly, his work is discussed in considerable detail. Czigány writes of him with zest and sympathy, though Balassi's last departure for Poland took place in 1589 not 1583, the "cryptonym" of his second Muse was *Coelito* not "Coelie", and the famous "Julia Cycle" was influenced more by Johannes Secundus than Petrarch. Literal translations such as we are given here can hardly give an idea of Balassi's poetic talent; a pity that Czigány did not know of the existence of some excellent English versions by Keith Bosley. The chapter on Count Miklós Zrínyi, author of *The Peril of Sziget*, is well-written, but one misses the comparative context, the confrontation of this epe poem with similar works by the Polish Potocki or the Dalmatian Gundulić. Kelemen Mikes, the eighteenth-century émigré writer, is treated with much reverence, but curiously, Czigány forgets about the prose works of another exile, Mikes's master, Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II, whose *Confessions* (written in Latin) and *Mémoires* (written in French) are important pieces of contemporary Hungarian prose.

"In the eighteenth century no major poet emerged in Hungary" writes Czigány, reading which one wonders whether he is trying to contradict Hungarian scholars' high opinion of Mihály Csokonai (1773-1805) — the remark with which he concluded his discussion of Csokonai's poetry seems to confirm this view. This is just as well, since from the few translations printed alongside the text it is impossible to gauge Csokonai's real stature. As to the Romantic poet and playwright, Károly Kisfaludy, we are first told that "he was only a figurehead of the Aurora Circle" and then, a few lines later on, that he was "a literary dictator", albeit less autocratic than Kazinczy. One of these definitions is surely untrue.

The nineteenth century is Czigány's own period and he handles it competently, though one might query his decision to provide a summary of the contents of quite a few novels no

longer read even by Hungarians. Still, his discussions of Eötvös, Kemény, Madách and Jókai are informative and firmly controlled. It is in this part of the book, however, that his inclusion of a large number of Hungarian expressions in the text begins to irritate. These send the reader to the elaborate sixteen-page glossary, which explains such expressions as *régi dicsőség* or *irodalmi nidal* ("past glory" and "literary consciousness"). Some of these could have been explained with a simple footnote, others translated into plain English. At the same time, Czigány translates the titles of all Hungarian journals into English (with the single exception of *Nyugat*), so we read about *Pest News* rather than *Pesti Hírlap* and *Response* instead of *Világ*. True, all these titles are duly given in the Hungarian original in the index, but why not in the text?

The chapter called "Revolt Turned into Style" juxtaposes a number of writers somewhat fortuitously. The great Symbolist poet of the pre-1918 period, Endre Ady, is discussed lucidly and with a minimum of textual illustration (which is fortunate because most existing English translations of Ady are weak, if not disastrous), but he is followed by writers of a very different calibre and orientation such as Géza Gyóni, Kunec, Rodion Markovits and Krudy. Of these Czigány omits to mention that Kunec was a Transylvanian who spent the greater part of his life at Kolozsvár (now Cluj-Napoca in Romania) and gives the date of Krudy's death incorrectly (he died in 1933), but his commentary on their work is satisfactory. On the other hand, it is strange that among the poets of the *Nyugat* Gyula Juhász is considered a "major" and Milán Füst a "minor" one. Füst, who, apart from being a very original and influential poet, wrote good prose, challenging plays, and a passionately argued book on aesthetics, gets less than fair treatment; the space allotted to him is exactly the same as that given to Oszkár Gellért, a third-rate poet of the same generation.

Hungarian literature in our own century presents all sorts of problems to anyone trying to systematize and evaluate it properly. Czigány defines the avant-garde in a way that is certainly not traditional, listing the work of prose-writer Lajos Nagy and of the immensely talented Socialist poet Attila József under this heading. But if they both belong to the "avant-garde", surely Andor Gábor does not. Why is he then discussed in the same chapter? Because, it seems, he was a Communist, and an émigré in Moscow, and both Nagy and József had ties with the Hungarian Communist Party. On the other hand, Kassák, the great father-figure of the Hungarian avant-garde, was regarded by the Communists as a traitor, or worse. Czigány admires Kassák (ably translated into English by Edwin Morgan) whose importance has certainly grown since his death in 1967, yet it is unlikely that "his circle can now be regarded as a major alternative to the *Nyugat* movement". For one thing the few people of real talent attached to Kassák's circle went their own way sooner rather than later, and Kassák appears as a prophet forsaken by most of his disciples. He was a pioneer, no doubt, and the author of a riveting though conventionally written autobiography, but his movement could not offer a genuine alternative at the time — only a missed opportunity.

One modern writer whose work deserved more thorough discussion is Zsigmond Reményik (1900-1962). He spent much of his youth abroad, travelling in Europe and South America. His embittered, gloomy, powerful fiction is unlike anything Hungarian prose has produced this century; he is the only modern Hungarian writer whose art occasionally plumbs the depths of a Dostoevsky. *Dust and Ashes* (1955) is an unforgettable indictment of human relations in pre-1918 Hungary, but it is not mentioned in *The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature*.

For someone committed to purely literary values, Czigány dwells far too long on such conservative writers of the interwar period as Cécile Tormay. Granted Tormay was translated into English, but so was Passuth, who is finished off in one awful sentence. And is the peasant-lad turned alcoholic Fascist poet, Sándor Weöres, worth seventeen lines when better poets (Zoltán Nádasdy, István Lakatos, or the Transylvanian János Székely and Árpád Patkás) go unmentioned and the thoroughly minor

László Kálnoky merits merely a sentence? Kálnoky's case is symptomatic in another respect: it shows how inconsistently Czigány has updated his manuscript (finished, it seems in 1978). While he duly records the death of Gyula Illyés in 1983, he fails to notice Kálnoky's amazing poetic rebirth, which took place in the late 1960s and early 70s, claims that László Nagy's last book was *Exiled into Poetry* (*Versben bujdosó*, 1973) when in fact Nagy published another book of poetry before his death in 1978; he seems to think that Andor Sütő's latest play is *Star of the Snake* (1973) when in fact two further plays by the same author were published in 1977 and 1980 respectively; and finally makes out that *An Exhibition of Roses* (*Rózsakidallás*, 1977) is Örkény's last work when Örkény finished the posthumously published *Scenario* (*Forgatókönyv*, 1979), a challenging dramatic parable just before his death.

For all these errors and omissions *The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature* gives a fairly accurate picture of the various periods of Hungarian literature and is a mine of useful information and well-balanced judgement. Czigány follows his text with a very fine-page bibliography that shows which authors have been translated into English.

His book is altogether more readable than the English language *History of Hungarian Literature* published by Corvina last year. This is a synthetic effort, edited by Tibor Klaniczay and based partly on the *Histoire abrégée de la littérature hongroise* of Klaniczay, Szende, and Szabolcsi (1962) and partly on *A magyar irodalom története* (published in six volumes by Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, between 1961 and 1966). It has been extended and brought up to date by four different authors, while less than five translators have endeavoured to put the Hungarian originals into suitable English. The outcome is a very heterogeneous book. Some parts are well laid out and written with care and meticulous scholarship, but others include passages of badly translated outdated Marxist clichés. This is particularly true of the twentieth-century section, written by Attila Tamás where the reader is sure quite sure whether the clumsiness of the text has something to do with the style of the original or only with the sheer ineptitude of the translator. Among other things we learn that in 1918 "with the socialist revolution, society headed bravely for the future" (p.400), that Kassák's poems "were not divided into verses" (p.400), that the fine contemporary poet László Nagy "confronted tragedy with insolence" (p.404), and that in one poem István Simon portrayed "the peasants continuing to scythe... indissolubly bound to their tools" (p.495). I could give many similar examples.

A *History of Hungarian Literature* contains a number of factual mistakes. 100: István Petőfi was born in 1823 not 1825; Radnóti Fáy's *Snulite* was published in 1930 not 1936; Káldi Lengyel ("the Hungarian Solzhenitsyn") was arrested in one of Stalin's purges in 1936 and not in 1949; the title of András Sütő's best-selling novel, *Anyám könnyű álma*, ought to be translated as "My Mother Promised Light Sleep" rather than "Mother Promised Better Dreams". Corvina's handbook deliberately ignores contemporary Hungarian writing in the West and gives only perfunctory information about the Hungarian-language literature in Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. While it is reliable on old Hungarian literature and full of critical insights on nineteenth-century authors (this section was written by Béla G. Németh), its treatment of contemporary Hungarian writing is superficial and incomplete. The work of such poets as Gyula Hernádi, Rózsa Ignác, László Passuth and Sándor Török is ignored; Áron Kertész, Péter Esterházy and Péter Nádas are mentioned but not discussed; of the poets István Bella, László Kálnoky, László Marai and György Petri are missing; to mention only a few well-known names. On the credit side, the Corvina *History* includes quite good translations from the works of outstanding Hungarian poets by such translators as Keith Bosley, Edwin Morgan and Vernon Watkins.

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Treasuring the text

J. W. Jolliffe

R. A. SAYCE and DAVID MASKELL
A Descriptive Bibliography of Montaigne's Essays 1580-1700
 221pp. Bibliographical Society/Modern Humanities Research Association. £20.
 0 19 721794 X

The main outline of the development of Montaigne's *Essays* is well known. The two books published at Bordeaux in 1580 were augmented both by elaboration of the original texts for an edition in 1582 and thereafter also by the addition of a third book, first published in 1588. Montaigne continued until his death in 1592 to modify and expand them in a copy of the 1588 edition, the "exemplaire de Bordeaux", which survives to this day. If this were all, it would present an editor with problems insoluble in two dimensions. But, it could be argued, the text did not become stable until 1635, with the last of the editions produced under the watchful eye of Mlle de Gournay, the "fille d'alliance" whom Montaigne had praised in the closing pages of *Essai* II, 17, and even then only by including as "text" all her manuscript corrections to the printed sheets.

When R. A. Sayce died in 1977, after ten years of work on this bibliography of the early editions from 1580 to the end of the next century, his widow wisely asked David Maskell to complete it and see it through the press. The resulting book, well produced by the Alden Press, is not definitive since all known copies have not been examined for variant details, yet it provides a platform for further research and

an indication of the sources for establishing the text which editors of Montaigne cannot ignore. Each edition, and in some cases a particular copy, is described with full indications of paging and signature irregularities, and select readings permitting the identification of textual origins for some editions. The limitations of "quasi-facsimile transcription" of title-pages are avoided by the provision of reproductions of the title-pages of each variant issue. Further plates illustrate some of the problems associated with Mlle de Gournay's intervention and variations in the different issues. The relationship of edition to edition, of issue to issue and even of copy to copy are all set out or implied in the descriptions and the accompanying notes.

The introduction, which guides the reader through the conventions and abbreviations in the descriptions, is provided with an almost parallel French translation, for Continental scholars are less familiar than ourselves with the practice of "la bibliographie matérielle". Two potentially important copies have not been found: Montesquieu's copy of the 1595 Paris edition, and the Spanheim copy of the 1635 Paris edition; could this latter prove to be the unexamined Moscow copy? Some of the speculations on the printing and publishing of the early unauthorized editions are a little suspect: the 1587 Paris edition was unlikely to have been printed by Jean Du Carroy, who had been banished in the previous year; the evidence is almost all presented for the Geneva origin of the 1595 duodecimo edition, but it is called, by a misreading of the title-page, the "1595 Lyons" edition; the 1593 octavo edition, by the same reckoning and with more reason,

should be called the "1593 Avignon" edition. These are small points; Mlle de Gournay herself could not control her own printers, and the pirates, though complicating the line of descent of the text, do not provide anything of importance to the editor.

Piracy of the text began early, in 1587, and doctrinal tampering with the text in 1595, the very year in which Mlle de Gournay was attempting to realize in print the last state of the author's intentions. The demand for the text and the unauthorized editions to meet it run parallel to Mlle de Gournay's struggle to see in print and in circulation what she believed to be a text which would not betray Montaigne. The pursuit of copies in the *Bibliography* is necessitated by her habit of correcting the printed sheets in her own hand. After her death and after their condemnation by the Catholic Church, as the *Bibliography* shows, the demand ends in the reduction of the *Essays* to mere collections of aphorisms. In this sense, the *Bibliography* is much more than an elaborate listing of editions: it indicates the diverse movements of taste and the shift in the acceptability of the text.

One may feel that Montaigne himself has disappeared, been buried under the weight of the meticulous recording of the minute differences between copy and copy. Yet the thought of this labour expended by Richard Sayce, reflecting the life spent in the service of the text by Mlle de Gournay, brings one back to the author himself. Bowdlerized by the Calvinists in 1595, put on the *Index* of prohibited books in 1676, he remains a thorn in the flesh to all bigots and a source of admiration to all who prize humanity.

New World physic

Robert A. McNeil

ROBIN PRICE
An Annotated Catalogue of Medical Americana in the Library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine
 319pp. Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine. £22.50.
 0 85484 040 0

The list of the Wellcome Institute Library catalogues is well up to the standard of its predecessors. Robin Price's work forms a supplement to both S. A. J. Moorat's three-volume catalogue of the Library's manuscripts and Noel Poynter's listing of the printed books up to 1850, also in three volumes. This new catalogue is slightly inconsistent in its coverage: while the books and printed materials it includes are restricted to pre-1822 Latin American and Caribbean items, the manuscript listings cover everything of North or South American interest in the Wellcome collections, of whatever date. Thus we have, first, descriptions of 290 books and pamphlets from colonial Spanish America (221 of them from Mexico), thirteen from Brazil, six from Jamaica and no

less than sixty-three from the French Caribbean. There follow listings for nineteen early periodicals (twelve from Mexico) and detailed accounts of 149 manuscripts, covering the Americas from Alaska to the River Plate — with one excursion to the Philippines — though again the bulk of the collection comes from Mexico. This Mexican preponderance presumably reflects the origin of much of the collection in the libraries of Nicolás León and Francisco Guerra, both eminent Mexican bibliophiles and medical historians.

The individual entries in the catalogue are sensibly arranged — chronologically under country for the printed items and alphabetically in one sequence for the manuscripts — pleasingly set out and informative without being tiresomely discursive. Mr Price's annotations, on both books and manuscripts, are models of what such things should be — learned, elegant and self-effacing. And the whole is splendidly indexed, stoutly bound and enriched by thirty well-chosen illustrations.

But what of the material itself? Not for the first time with the Wellcome, I find myself agreeably surprised at both the richness of the holdings and the amount of extra-medical interest they contain. For example, here is Sir

Clements Markham's bolograph account — still unpublished — of his Peruvian travels in 1853, including a letter from his friend and mentor W. H. Prescott; here is a fine copy of Alonso de la Vera Cruz's *Phisica. Speculatio*, regarded as the first scientific work to be printed in the New World (1557). Alméida's lecture notes from Montpellier and Paris may retrospectively acquire an American interest through his later associations with Humboldt and the infamous Dr Francia of Paraguay; and there can be no doubt as to the importance of the *Verdadera Medicina* (1607) of Juan de Barrios, in the only recorded complete copy. Future social historians of the Americas will ignore the Wellcome collections at their peril.

In his introduction Robin Price gives us further tantalizing glimpses of the Wellcome American collections: only 391 of 6,000 printed items are listed here (further catalogues are promised), and we are told of collections of nineteenth and early twentieth-century travel literature, of pamphlets devoted to saints at times of pestilence and of eighteenth and nineteenth-century theses from the University of Mexico. Future social historians of the Americas will ignore the Wellcome collections at their peril.

Chivalric behaviour

Nicholas Orme

G. A. LESTER
 Sir John Paston's "Grete Boke": A descriptive catalogue, with an introduction, of British Library MS Lansdowne 285
 197pp. Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer. £17.50.
 0 85991 161 6

The career of Sir John Paston (1442-79) illustrates the family's growing sense of its aristocratic status. Unlike his father and uncles, whose educations culminated in the practical study of the common law, the nineteen-year-old John II was "finished" at the court of Edward IV and received a knighthood (the first in the family) two years later. In adult life, he followed the traditional Paston concerns with property and politics in Norfolk, but combined these with courtly activities. He fought in a tournament, went to a royal wedding in Burgundy and tried but failed to marry into the family of Queen Elizabeth Wydeville.

what he grandly referred to as his "great book". This was a volume of treatises, professionally copied for him, on war, chivalry and courtly ceremonies; now Lansdowne MS 285 in the British Library. The book contains thirty-one items, chiefly of three kinds: four on ceremonial, five on war and by far the largest number — nineteen — on jousts and tournaments. Many are important in the history of these institutions, and have long been used by historians, so that it is helpful to have G. A. Lester's thorough description of the volume and its contents. His work is subtitled *A Descriptive Catalogue*, and duly identifies the history of the MS, the constituent texts, relationships with other MSS and editions and discussions by modern scholars. It is not a study of the compilation, and provides little historical context. Most of the introduction is devoted to the MS itself, only a few pages to fifteenth-century culture and virtually nothing to ceremony, war and tournaments as such. It is a pity that, as a result, the book's importance does not emerge clearly for the general historical reader.

Unfortunately, too, the book has not been well produced. It is typewritten — nothing wrong there — but the design is that of a thesis, not a book, with no running titles and hardly any headings, making it difficult to use. Unbelievably, there is no index, preventing the reader from getting at the author's valuable data on people, events and texts unless he ploughs through the whole tome. These shortcomings are regrettable, for the book is otherwise a welcome source of information.

In *Renaissance English Translations of Erasmus to 1700* (256pp., University of Toronto Press, £29.50; 0 8020 2411 4), E. J. Devereux enlarges the *Checklist* published sixteen years ago by the Oxford Bibliographical Society into a full descriptive bibliography with much significant detail. An introduction describes the important role the translations played at different stages in the English Renaissance and Reformation, and the entries for forty different Latin works outline the special circumstances of publication, of translations, of the various titles into English.

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